508
THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

THE

ARMENIAN;

OR,

THE GHOST SEER.

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A HISTORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

Serfojee Rajah 1827

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

F. SCHILLER,

AUTHOR OF THE ROBBERS, DON CARLOS, &c.

BY

THE REV. W. RENDER.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Work now presented to the Public originally appeared in a German periodical publication entitled, THALIA, *under the name of* The Ghost Seer, a True History, found among the Papers of Count O**; *and was continued from time to time. It has been supposed, and it is not improbable, that it was intended to expose the impostures of the sect of the* Illuminati, *which was then beginning to extend itself in*

Germany.

Germany. A translation of the first volume was published about five years ago, with a very imperfect and unsatisfactory account of the conclusion of the History. It was presumed, that a faithful translation of the whole Work would be highly acceptable to those who have read that volume, and to all the admirers of the genius of Schiller.

THE

GHOST SEER.

I SHALL relate an event, which to many will appear incredible, but of the greateſt part of which I myſelf was an eye witneſs. The few, who are acquainted with a certain political occurrence, will (if theſe leaves ſhould find them alive) have a perfect key to the publication; but without this Key it will be looked upon as an addition to the hiſtory of deceit and artifice ſo often impoſed upon mankind. The boldneſs of the undertaking, which malice was able to conjecture and to pur-

fue, muft excite aftonifhment, and alfo the methods which they were able to invent, to fecure themfelves in their projects. Genuine, bold truth, will conduct my pen; for when thefe leaves go into the world, I fhall probably be no more, and fhall never experience the credit with which they are received.

It was on my return to Courland, in the year 17—, about the time of the Carnival, that I paid a vifit to the Prince of W.... in Venice. We had known each other in the P.... military fervice, and renewed here an acquaintance which peace had interrupted. As I wifhed to fee the remarkable city of Venice, the Prince eafily perfuaded me to bear him company, and to delay my departure from hence until his remittances, which were expected every day, arrived. We agreed to live together as long as our ftay at

Venice ſhould laſt, and the Prince was ſo kind as to offer to ſhare his habitation with me at the Moor Hotel. He lived in diſguiſe, becauſe he wiſhed to enjoy himſelf, and his little income did not permit him to maintain the dignity of his rank. Two cavaliers, upon whoſe ſecreſy he could entirely rely, compoſed (beſides ſome truſty ſervants) his whole houſehold. He ſhunned expences more from temperance than œconomy. He fled from diverſions of all kinds; and at the age of thirty-five years, it may be ſaid, that he had reſiſted all the charms of that voluptuous city. The fair ſex was not regarded by him: gravity, and an almoſt profound melancholy, overſhadowed his mind. His paſſions were ſtill, but obſtinate to exceſs; his choice ſlow and fearful; his attachment warm and laſting. Locked up in his own viſionary ideas, he often was a ſtranger to the world about him; and, con-

fcious of his own deficiency in the knowledge of mankind, he very feldom obferved that line of conduct which influences thofe who are wary and fufpicious. Nobody was ever born to be governed more than he, without being the dupe of artifice and cunning: at the fame time he was unterrified and decifive. As foon as he was once convinced, he poffeffed equal courage to combat an acknowledged prejudice, and to die for a new one. As the third prince of his houfe, he could not have any views for the fovereignty; his ambition, therefore, on that point, was never awakened: his paffion had taken quite another direction. Confcious of his own averfion to being governed by the opinion of others, he never forced his own upon any perfon as a law. The peaceable paths of folitude, and a private life, were the fummit of his wifhes. He read much, but without

felection.

felection. A narrow education, together with being initiated into the military fervice early in life, ferved to check all application to the ftudy of literature—all the knowledge which he afterwards acquired added but little to his ideas. He was a Proteftant, as all his family had been, by birth, not by enquiry, which he never attempted, though he was, in a certain epoch of his life, an enthufiaft—he never, to my knowledge, became a free-mafon.

One evening, we, as ufual, took a walk by ourfelves, very well mafked, upon St. Mark's Place. As it grew late, and the people were difperfing, the Prince obferved that a mafk followed us every where. The mafk was an Arminian, and walked alone. We doubled our fteps, and fought by ftriking into different turns of our road to lofe him, but in vain, for he always remained clofe behind us.

" You have not had, I hope, any intrigue here?" ſaid the Prince at laſt to me. " The huſbands at Venice are very dangerous."

" I know not one lady," I replied.

" Let us ſit down here, and ſpeak German," he continued. " I imagine they miſtake us for ſome other perſons."

We ſat down upon a ſtone bench, and expected that the maſk would paſs by. He came ſtraight towards us, and took his ſeat very cloſe by the ſide of the Prince; who drew out his watch, and ſaid rather loud in French, riſing at the ſame time from his ſeat:

" Nine—come! we forget that they wait for us at the *Louvre*."

This was only a pretence to deceive the maſk as to our rout.

" Nine !" repeated the maſk in the ſame language, very expreſſively and ſlowly. " Wiſh yourſelf joy, Prince, (whilſt he called him by his right name), *at nine o'clock he died.*"

With this he roſe, and went away: we looked at one another very much amazed.

" Who is dead ?" ſaid the Prince, after a long ſilence.

" Let us follow him," ſaid I, " and requeſt an explanation."

We hurried through all the bye ways of St. Mark, but the maſk was not to be found. Chagrined at our bad ſucceſs, we proceeded to our hotel. The

Prince fpoke not a word in our way home, but walked apart from me, apparently in deep reflection, and greatly agitated, as he afterwards confeffed to me. When we got home, affuming an air of gaiety—

"It is indeed laughable," faid he, "that a madman fhould thus be able to difturb the tranquillity of a perfon's mind by a couple of words."

We wifhed each other a good night, and as foon as I was in my own room, I noted in my pocket-book the day and the hour when this extraordinary event happened—it was upon a Thurfday. The following evening the Prince faid to me:

"Let us take a walk again to St. Mark's Place, and try to difcover this myfterious Arminian. I am very anxious to unravel this adventure."

I agreed

I agreed to the propofal, and we remained till eleven o'clock wandering about the place: the Arminian was no where to be feen. We repeated our vifits the four following evenings, and each time with the fame bad fuccefs. The fixth evening, when we left our hotel, I had the forefight (whether by defign or not I cannot fay) to tell the fervants where we might be found, if there fhould be any enquiry after us. The Prince obferved this, and praifed my attention with a fmiling countenance. There was a great crowd upon St. Mark's Place when we arrived there; and we fcarcely had gone thirty fteps, when I obferved the Arminian, who pufhed himfelf through the crowd in great hafte, and feemed to be in the act of fearching for fomebody. We were juft upon the point of reaching him, when the Baron F. . . one of the Prince's companions, came breath-

lefs towards us, and delivered a letter to the Prince.

" It is fealed black," faid he, " and we thought that it might contain intelligence of great confequence."

It ftruck me like a thunderbolt. The Prince went to a lamp, and began to read the contents.

" My coufin is dead," he cried.

" When?" faid I, interrupting him haftily.

He once more read the letter.

" Laft Thurfday, at nine o'clock in the evening."

We fcarcely had time to recover ourfelves from our furprize, when the Arminian appeared.

" You

" You are known here, gracious Sire," ſaid he to the Prince. " Haſten to the Moor: you'll find there ambaſſadors from the Senate, and do not heſitate to accept the honour which they will offer you. The Baron F... forgot to tell you that your remittances are arrived."

He left us precipitately, and mingled with the crowd. We haſtened to our hotel, and found every thing as the Arminian had announced to us. Three noblemen of the Republic were arrived ready to receive the Prince, and to conduct him with ſplendor to the aſſembly, where the firſt nobility of the city expected him. He had juſt time enough to let me underſtand, by a ſlight hint, that he wiſhed me to ſet up for him. About eleven o'clock at night he returned. He came into the room ſerious and thoughtful; and, after having diſ

miſſed the ſervants, he ſeized me by the hand.

" Count," he ſaid, with the words of Hamlet, " there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philoſophy."

" Gracious Sir," I replied, " you ſeem to forget that you are enriched with the proſpect of a ſovereignty *."

" Do not remind me of that," ſaid the Prince, " I have ſomething of greater importance to me than a crown

* The deceased was the hereditary Prince, the only son of the reigning .... who was in years, very sickly, and without the least prospect of having an heir to his dominions. An uncle of our Prince, almost in the same situation, now alone stood between him and the throne. I am obliged to mention this circumstance, as the subject will be treated of in the Work.

GERMAN EDITOR.

that

that now claims my attention, if that Arminian has not been at guefs work."

"How is that poffible, Prince?" I replied.

"Then will I refign all my princely hope for the habit of a monk."

The following evening we went together earlier to the market-place. A heavy fhower of rain obliged us to take fhelter in a coffee-houfe, where we obferved a number of perfons at a gaming table. The Prince placed himfelf behind the chair of a Spaniard to fee the game played, whilft I went into an adjoining room to read the papers. A little time afterwards I heard a noife. Before the arrival of the Prince, the Spaniard univerfally loft, but fince he entered, the latter won upon every card. The whole game was totally changed, and the bank was in danger

of

of being challenged by the pointer, whom this lucky reverſe of fortune had made bolder. The Venetian, who kept it, ſaid to the Prince in a ſurly tone—

"You have changed the luck, and ſhall quit the table."

The Prince looked at him coolly, without giving him an anſwer, and kept his place, but the Venetian repeated his command in French. The latter thought that the Prince did not underſtand either language; and, addreſſing himſelf to the company with a ſneering grin—

"Tell me, Gentlemen," ſaid he, "how I ſhall make myſelf underſtood by this fool?"

Hereupon he ſtood up, and would have ſtruck the Prince; but the Prince's patience forſaking him, he did not wait for the attack, but ſeized the Venetian

by the throat, and dafhed him with violence on the ground. This circumftance threw the whole houfe into confufion. Upon hearing the uproar, I ran into the room, and unguardedly called him by his name."

" Take care, Prince," faid I, incautioufly, " we are in Venice !"

The name of the Prince excited an univerfal filence, and foon after a confufed murmur ran through the affembly, which appeared to me to have a dangerous tendency. The Italians prefent crowded round each other, and walked afide. They foon quitted the room, one after the other, and we found ourfelves left only with the Spaniard and feveral Frenchmen.

" You are loft, gracious Sir," faid a Frenchman, " if you do not leave the city directly. The Venetian, whom

you

you have handled ſo roughly, is rich enough to hire a bravo—it will only coſt him fifty ſequins to be revenged by your death."

The Spaniard, in concert with the Frenchmen, offered to conduct the Prince with ſafety to his houſe. We were ſtanding thus conſulting what was beſt to be done, when the door of the room was ſuddenly opened, and ſeveral officers of the *State Inquiſition* entered. They produced an order from the government, in which we were both commanded to follow them immediately. They conducted us under a ſtrong eſcort to a canal, where a boat waited for us. We were ordered to embark; but before we quitted it, our eyes were blindfolded; and, upon our landing, we found that they led us up a ſtone ſtair-caſe, and then through a long winding paſſage over arches, as we could diſcover by the repeated echoes

that

that ſounded under our feet. We ſoon arrived at another ſtair-caſe, which in twenty-ſix ſteps brought us to the bottom. We then heard a door creek upon its hinges; and when they took the bandage from our eyes, we found ourſelves in a ſpacious hall, encircled by an aſſembly of venerable old men. All appeared in ſable robes, and the hall hung with black cloth, was dimly lighted by a few ſcattered tapers. A deadly ſilence prevailed through the aſſembly, which cauſed in us an awful ſenſation too powerful to be deſcribed. One of the old men, who appeared to be the principal ſtate inquiſitor, came near to the Prince, and ſpoke to him with a ſolemn countenance, whilſt another ſet before him the Venetian.

"Do you acknowledge this man to be the ſame that you uſed ſo roughly in the coffee-houſe?"

"Yes!"

" Yes!" anſwered the Prince.

Then turning to the priſoner—

" Is that the perſon you would have aſſaſſinated this evening ?"

The priſoner anſwered, " Yes."

Immediately the judges opened the circle, and we ſaw, with the utmoſt horror, the head of the Venetian ſeparated from his ſhoulders.

" Are you ſatisfied with this ſacrifice?" ſaid the State Inquiſitor.

The Prince fainted in the arms of his conductors.

" Go," he continued, with a terrible voice, as he turned towards me, " and think in future more favourably of the adminiſtration of juſtice in Venice."

We

We could not learn who our unknown friend was, who had thus delivered us, by the arm of juftice, from the diabolical plans of the affaffin.

We reached our habitation terrified in the extreme. It was midnight. The chamberlain *Z...* waited for us upon the ftairs with great impatience.

"How lucky it was," faid he to the Prince, as he lighted us up ftairs, "that you fent the meffenger as you did; the intelligence from the Baron, which was brought to this houfe from the market-place, excited in us a dreadful anxiety for your fafety."

"I fent a meffage!" faid the Prince. "When? I know nothing of it."

"This evening, after eight o'clock, a perfon arrived, and faid, we muft not be alarmed if you fhould not return until late at night."

Here

Here the Prince ſaid to me—

" You, perhaps, without my knowledge, have taken this precaution."

" I know nothing of it."

" It muſt certainly be ſo, your Highneſs," ſaid the chamberlain, " for here is your watch, which he left with me as a proof that he had been with you."

The Prince felt his pocket immediately: the watch was actually gone; and, looking upon that which the chamberlain held in his hand, he acknowledged it to be his own.

" Who brought it?" ſaid he, with eagerneſs.

" An unknown maſk in an Arminian habit, who immediately went away."

We ſtood and looked at each other in ſilent horror.

" What think you of this?" ſaid the Prince at laſt, after a long pauſe, " It is now certain that I have in Venice a ſecret inſpector."

The frightful tranſactions of this night threw the Prince into a fever, which confined him to his room for eight days. During this time our hotel was crowded with citizens and ſtrangers, who had lately learnt the rank of the Prince. They ſtrove to vie with each other in ſhewing civility to the Prince, and we ſaw with pleaſure every night how faſt ſuſpicion was wearing away. Love letters and billets came from all quarters. Every perſon endeavoured to make himſelf uſeful. The whole proceedings of the State Inquiſition were no longer thought of. In the mean time, the Court of . . . did not wiſh to haſten

haſten the departure of the Prince, and therefore gave inſtructions to a rich banker in Venice to furniſh him with large ſums of money. Thus he was put into a condition, contrary to his inclination, of remaining longer in Italy; and, agreeable to his wiſhes, I conſented not to haſten my departure. As ſoon as he was ſo far recovered as to be able to leave his chamber, the phyſician ordered him to make an excurſion upon the Brenta for the benefit of the air. The weather was fine, and we ſoon made an agreeable party. Juſt as we were about to ſtep into the gondola, the Prince miſſed a key to a little box which contained ſome valuable papers. We returned immediately to look for it. He remembered perfectly to have locked the box the day before, and ſince that time he had not quitted the room. But all our efforts to diſcover it were fruitleſs: we therefore abandoned the ſearch; and the Prince,

Prince, whoſe ſoul was above ſuſpicion, gave it over as loſt, but requeſted me not to take any notice of it. The voyage was delightfully enchanting; the landſcape ſeemed to increaſe in beauty and variety at every turn of the river; added to this, a clear ſky, which in the middle of February formed a May-day. The charming gardens that ſurrounded the elegant country houſes which every where adorned the ſides of the Brenta, together with the majeſtic Venice crowned with an hundred towers, as if riſing from the water, offered us one of the moſt delightful proſpects in the world. We loſt ourſelves entirely in the beautiful magic of the ſcenery around us. Our ſpirits were elated, and even the Prince aſſumed an air of gaiety, and joined with us in our frolickſome pleaſantry. Sweet muſic occupied our attention, when we got to the ſhore about two Italian miles from the town. It proceeded from a ſmall vil-

lage

lage where they were holding a fair. Here every art was practifed by the company. A troop of young maidens and children, dreffed in a theatrical manner, welcomed us with a pantomimic dance. The invention was new: nimblenefs and grace animated every motion. Before the dance was ended, one of them, who feemed to be the principal perfon, and who acted the part of the queen, fuddenly ftopped, as if reftrained by an invifible power. She ftood ftill, all followed her example, and the mufic ceafed. An univerfal filence prevailed in the whole affembly, whilft fhe remained with her eyes fixed upon the ground as in a profound trance: then fhe became as if infpired, looked wild, and cried in a tranfport of joy—

" A king is amongft us!"

She

She rofe, took her crown from her head, and placed it at the feet of the Prince. All who were prefent directed their eyes towards the Prince, who was a long time uncertain what could be the meaning of this juggle, fo well had fhe acted the monkey tricks of this farce in earneft. At length an univerfal clapping of hands interrupted this filence. I looked at the Prince, and perceived that he was not a little concerned and hurt to be examined by the enquiring eyes of the company. He diftributed money to the children, and haftened from the crowd. We had not gone far, when a venerable monk came from the crowd, and placed himfelf in the path we were purfuing.

"Sir," faid the Monk, "beftow fome of your money upon Madona; you will need her prayers."

He ſpoke this in a tone which ſtartled us—the crowd, however, ſoon ſeparated him from us. Our ſuit was in the meantime increaſed. An Engliſh Lord, whom the Prince had ſeen before at Nizza, ſeveral merchants from Leghorn, a German prelate, a French abbé, with ſeveral ladies, and a Ruſſian officer, attached themſelves to our party. The phyſiognomy of this laſt, had ſomething ſo remarkable about it, that it attracted our attention. Never in my life did I ſee ſo many traits, and ſo little character; ſo much inviting benevolence, and ſuch forbidding coldneſs painted together in one man's countenance. Every paſſion ſeemed to have formerly dwelt there, and to have abandoned it. Nothing remained but the ſtill piercing look of a perfect man of the world—every eye was fixed upon him wherever he went. This ſtranger followed at a diſtance, and ſeemed

feemed indifferent to whatever was going on. We arrived at the booth where a lottery was kept: the ladies bought tickets—we followed their example, and the Prince alfo purchafed a fhare. He won a fnuff box; and, when he opened it, I perceived him turn pale, and ftart back with the utmoft furprize—the little key he had loft was in it.

"What is this?" faid he to me when we were alone, with a fixed countenance, "an unknown power purfues me, an all-powerful being hovers over me; an invifible agency, which I cannot flee from, watches over all my actions. I muft feek the Arminian, and obtain an explanation from him."

The fun was fetting as we arrived at the pleafure houfe where the fupper was ferved up. The name of the

Prince had increafed our party to the number of fixteen perfons. Befides our former party, a virtuofo from Rome, feveral Swifs, and an adventurer from Palermo, who wore an uniform, and gave himfelf out for a captain, initiated themfelves into our fociety. It was agreed to fpend the whole evening here, and to return home by torch-light. The entertainment at the table was good, and the converfation very fprightly; the Prince could not refrain from relating the adventure of the key, which excited a general aftonifhment. A great difpute arofe concerning this affair:—The major part of the company had the temerity to think all thefe cunning tricks depended upon witchcraft. The Abbé, who had already drank a fufficient quantity of wine, challenged the whole kingdom of ghofts into the ring. The Englifhman fwore the mufician croffed himfelf for the af-

fiftance

ſiſtance of the Devil. A few, in the number of whom was the Prince, maintained that it was better not to give any decided opinions upon theſe ſubjects. During this converſation the Ruſſian officer entertained himſelf with the ladies, and ſeemed to be perfectly inattentive to the converſation. In the height of this diſpute, no one obſerved that the Sicilian had retired. A ſhort time afterwards he returned, clothed in a mantle, and placed himſelf behind the chair of the Frenchman.

" You have had the boldneſs," ſaid he, " to challenge all the kingdom of ghoſts.—Will you try one ?"

" Yes !" ſaid the Abbé, " if you will undertake to bring one before me."

 " That

" That I will," replied the Sicilian, turning himſelf about, " when theſe ladies and gentlemen ſhall have left us."

" Why ſo !" exclaimed the Engliſhman, " a jovial ghoſt will enjoy himſelf in ſuch good company."

" I will not anſwer for the conſequences," ſaid the Sicilian.

" Oh, heavens !" cried the ladies, and fled, terrified, from their ſeats.

" Let your ghoſt come," ſaid the Abbé, daringly, but warn him beforehand that he will find here ſharp-pointed tools ;" at the ſame time endeavouring to borrow a ſword.

" You may do, in that reſpect, as you pleaſe," ſaid the Sicilian coolly, " when you ſee it."

Here

Here he turned himſelf towards the Prince.

" Gracious Sir," ſaid he to him, " you believe that your key was in ſtrange hands—Can you gueſs in whoſe ?"

" No."

" Do you ſuſpect any body ?"

" I had certainly a ſuſpicion."

" Should you know the perſon if you were to ſee him ?"

" Without doubt."

Here the Sicilian put aſide his mantle, and took from under it a looking-glaſs, which he held before the eyes of the Prince.

" Is this the man ?"

The Prince ſtarted back with the utmoſt terror.

" What have you ſeen ?" aſked I.

" The Arminian !"

The Sicilian put the glaſs under his mantle.

" Was that the perſon you meant ?" enquired the whole company.

" The very ſame."

Upon this every countenance was changed, no one was heard to laugh, and all eyes were fixed attentively upon the Sicilian.

" Monſieur

" Monſieur Abbé," ſaid the Engliſh-man, " this thing becomes ſerious: I adviſe you to think of your retreat."

" The fellow is in league with the Devil," cried the Frenchman, and ruſhed out of the houſe. The ladies ran ſhrieking from the hall—the virtuoſo followed them—the German prelate ſnored in his chair—the Ruſſian remained ſitting as if perfectly indifferent to what was paſſing.

" You thought, perhaps, to have excited a great laugh," ſaid the Prince, " againſt this boaſter, if he had not gone out; or did you intend to have performed what you promiſed?"

" It is true," ſaid the Sicilian, " with the Abbé I was not in earneſt; I took him at his word, becauſe I knew that the coward would not ſuffer me to go ſo far as to put it in execution."

"The thing itſelf is of too ſerious a nature to make a joke of."

"You maintain, then, that you have it in your power to do what you aſſerted?"

The magician was ſilent, and ſeemed to be ſtudying the expreſſive countenance of the Prince.

"Yes," anſwered he, at length.

The curioſity of the Prince was already excited to the higheſt degree, for he had always believed in ſupernatural beings, and this act of the Arminian brought back to his mind all his former reflections on this ſubject, which reaſon had in ſome meaſure driven away. He went aſide with the Sicilian, and I heard him converſing with him very earneſtly.

"You

" You have before you a man," continued he, " who burns with impatience for an explanation of this affair. I would efteem that man as my benefactor, as my beft friend, who would, in this refpect, remove my doubts, and diffipate the mift from my eyes.—Will you deferve this great fervice at my hands?"

" What do you require of me?" faid the magician, with thoughtfulnefs.

" To give me immediately a proof of your art, let me fee an apparition."

" Why fhould I do this?"

" That you may judge, from a nearer acquaintance, whether I am worthy of higher inftruction."

" I eſteem you above all others, mighty Prince. A ſecret power in your countenance, which you yourſelf are ignorant of, bound me at firſt ſight irreſiſtibly to you. You are more powerful than you are aware of. You have an undoubted right to command all my power, but—"

" Then allow me to ſee an apparition."

" I muſt be firſt certain that you do not make this requeſt out of curioſity; for, although the ſupernatural powers are ſubjected to my will in ſome reſpect, it is under the ſacred condition that I do not abuſe my authority."

" My motives are the pureſt. I wiſh for an explanation of facts."

Here they left their places, and approached to a diſtant window, where I could not hear what was ſaid. The Engliſhman, who had alſo heard this converſation, took me aſide.

"Your prince has a noble mind," ſaid he, "but I pity him, for I will bet my life he has to deal with a ſharper."

"That will be proved," ſaid I, "when he comes to inveſtigate this matter."

"Let me tell you," ſaid the Engliſhman, "that the Devil makes himſelf very dear. He will not practiſe his art without touching the caſh. There are nine of us. We will make a collection. This will break the neck of his ſcheme, and perhaps open the eyes of the Prince."

"I am

" I am content."

The Englifhman immediately threw fix guineas into a plate, and gathered in the ring. Each gave feveral louis. The Ruffian efpecially was highly pleafed at our propofal: he put a bank note of a hundred fequins into the plate—a piece of extravagance which ftartled the Englifhman. We brought the collection to the Prince.

" Have the goodnefs," faid the Englifhman, " to entreat, in our names, that gentleman to let us fee a proof of his art, and perfuade him to accept this fmall token of our acknowledgments for his trouble."

The Prince alfo put a coftly ring into the plate, and prefented it to the Sicilian. He confidered of our propofal

" Gentle-

"Gentlemen," he began, "this unexpected generofity is highly flattering. I obey your wifhes. Your defires fhall be fulfilled."

In the meantime he rang the bell.

"With refpect to this money," he continued, "to which I have no right, if you will give me leave, I will prefent it to the neareft monaftery, as a gratuity towards fo benevolent an inftitution. This ring I fhall always keep, as a valuable proof of the goodnefs of the beft of princes."

Here the mafter of the houfe entered, to whom he immediately delivered the money.

"He is ftill a fwindler," faid the Englifhman, "although he refufes the gold. It is done that he may get more into the Prince's favour."

Another ſaid, " the landlord is in league with him."

" What would you wiſh to ſee?" ſaid the Sicilian to the Prince."

" Let us have a great man," ſaid the Lord: " Challenge the Pope Gangi-nelli; it will be the ſame to this gentleman."

The Sicilian bit his lips.

" I dare not call for one who has received extreme unction."

" That is bad," ſaid the Engliſhman. " Perhaps we ſhould learn from him of what diſorder he died."

" The Marquis of *Lanoy*," ſaid the Prince, " was a French brigadier in a former war, and my moſt intimate

friend.

friend. In a battle near Haſtinbeck he received a deadly wound. They took him to my tent, where he ſoon after died in my arms. Before he expired—" Prince," ſaid he, " I ſhall never again behold my native country; I will therefore entruſt you with a ſecret, which is known to no one but myſelf. In a cloiſter upon the borders of Flanders, there lives a——" At that inſtant he expired. Death deſtroyed the thread of his diſcourſe. I could wiſh to have him brought before me, and to hear the concluſion of his tale."

" Well requeſted, by God," ſaid the Engliſhman, " I ſhall eſteem you as the greateſt conjurer in the world, if you comply with this requeſt."

We admired the wiſe choice of the Prince, and unanimouſly gave our conſent to the propoſition. In the mean

time

time the magician walked up and down the room with hafty fteps, and feemed to be holding a conference with himfelf.

"And was that all which the deceafed communicated to you?"

"All."

"Did you make any further enquiries, on account of what you heard, in his native country?"

"It was in vain."

"Did the Marquis of Lanoy live irreproachably? for I dare not call any one I pleafe from the dead."

"He died with penitence for the fins of his youth."

"Have

"Have you about you any token of his?"

"Yes."

The Prince had actually a snuff-box, on the lid of which a miniature picture of the Marquis was painted in enamel, which he usually laid near him upon the table.

"I do not desire to know what it is. Leave me alone: you shall see the deceased."

We were desired to go into another apartment, and wait until he called for us. At the same time he ordered all the moveables to be taken from the hall, the windows to be taken out, and the window shutters to be put close to. He also ordered the landlord, with whom he had already been conniving, to

to bring in a veſſel filled with hot coals, and to put out all the fires in the houſe carefully with water. Before we returned, he made us all promiſe that we would obſerve a profound ſilence during the whole of what we ſhould ſee or hear. All the doors of the rooms behind us leading to this apartment were faſtened. The clock had ſtruck eleven. A deadly ſilence prevailed through the whole houſe. Before we went out, the Ruffian ſaid to me—

" Have we any loaded piſtols with us?"

" Why?" ſaid I.

" It is at all events convenient," anſwered he. " Wait a minute, and I will go and ſee after ſome."

He went out, and the Baron and myſelf opened a window which looked

towards

towards another room, and we thought we heard people talking together, and a noiſe as if they were placing a ladder under it; but as that might only be a conjecture, I dared not give it out as certain. The Ruffian returned with a brace of piſtols, after being abſent about half an hour. We ſaw him load them. It was now near two o'clock when the magician appeared again, and announced that he was prepared. Before we returned, he ordered us to pull off our ſhoes, and to appear in our ſhirts, ſtockings, and under garments. The doors as before were all faſtened. We found, when we returned into the hall, a large circle made with coals, in which we could all ſtand very conveniently. Round about the room, and by the four walls, the boards were taken away, ſo that we ſeemed to ſtand as it were upon an iſland. An altar, hung with black cloth, was erected in the

middle

middle of the circle, under which was ſpread a carpet of red ſilk; a Chaldean Bible laid open near a death's head upon the altar, and a ſilver crucifix was faſtened in the centre. Inſtead of candles, ſpirits were burning in a ſilver veſſel. A thick ſmoke of olive wood darkened the hall, which almoſt extinguiſhed the lights. The conjurer was clothed as we were, but bare-footed. On his bare neck he wore an amulet * ſuſpended by a chain of human hair. Upon his loins he wore a white mantle, which was decorated with magical characters and myſterious figures. He made us join hands, and maintain a deep ſilence. Above all, he recom-

* Amulet was the name of a charm made of wood or other materials, and on which was engraved particular words and characters, and wore about the neck, to ſubvert the machinations of the Devil and his agents. They were held in high eſteem by the Arabs, Turks, and Jews, and particularly amongſt the Catholics.

mended

mended us not to aſk the apparition any queſtions. He requeſted the Engliſhman and myſelf (for he ſeemed to entertain the greateſt ſuſpicion of us) to hold two drawn ſwords, ſteadily and croſs ways, an inch above his head, as long as the ceremony ſhould laſt. We ſtood in a half circle around him. The Ruſſian officer preſſed near to the Engliſhman, and ſtood next to the altar. The magician placed himſelf upon the carpet, with his face towards the eaſt, ſprinkled holy water to the four corners of the world, and bowed thrice before the Bible. A quarter of an hour paſſed in ceremonious acts, perfectly unintelligible to us; at the end of which, he gave thoſe a ſign who ſtood behind him to hold him faſt by the hair. Struggling apparently with dreadful convulſions, he called the deceaſed by name three times; at the laſt, he ſtretched out his hand towards the crucifix;

cifix. We inftantly experienced a violent fhock, which feparated our hands. A fudden clap of thunder fhook the houfe to its foundation; at the fame time the window fhutters rattled, and all the doors were burft open. The apparatus fell in pieces, and as foon as the light was extinguifhed, we obferved diftinctly on the wall over the chimney-piece the figure of a man clothed in a bloody garment, with a pale and livid afpect.

"Who called me?" cried a faint hollow voice.

"Thy friend," faid the conjurer, "who venerates thy memory, and prays for thy foul."

At the fame time he mentioned the name of the Prince.

"What does he want?" continued the ghoft, after a very long paufe.

"He

" He wifhes to hear your confeffion to the end, which you began in this world but did not finifh.

" In a cloifter upon the borders of Flanders there lives—"

Here the houfe fhook again, the door opened of its own accord, and a violent clap of thunder was heard, as a flafh of lightning illuminated the room. Immediately another form, bloody and pale like the other, appeared at the threfhold. The fpirits in the vafe began to burn again, and the hall was as it firft appeared.

" Who is among us ?" cried the magician, looking with horror and aftonifhment at the fpectators. " I did not much wifh for thee."

The ghoſt immediately walked with a ſlow and majeſtic ſtep to the altar, and ſtood upon the carpet oppoſite to us. It ſeized the crucifix, and the firſt apparition inſtantly vaniſhed.

"Who is it that has called me?" ſaid the ſecond apparition.

The magician began to tremble. Fear and aſtoniſhment almoſt overpowered us. I now ſeized a piſtol—the magician wreſted it from my hand, and fired at the ghoſt. The ball rolled along the altar, and the figure remained amidſt the ſmoke unhurt. The magician immediately ſunk down in a fit.

"What have we here?" exclaimed the Engliſhman with aſtoniſhment, as he endeavoured to ſtrike the ghoſt with his ſword. The apparition arreſted his arm, and the ſword fell to the ground.

Here

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Here the ſweat of anguiſh ſtarted from my forehead, and the Baron confeſſed to us afterwards that he employed himſelf in praying. All this time the Prince ſtood fearleſs and unmoved, with his eyes rivetted upon the figure.

"Yes!" ſaid he at laſt pathetically, "I know thee: thou art Lanoy—thou art my friend. From whence doſt thou come?"

"I cannot divulge the myſteries of eternity.—Aſk me any queſtion that relates to my exiſtence on earth."

"Who lives in the cloiſter," ſaid the Prince, "of which you gave me notice at the hour of your death?"

"My daughter."

" How! Have you ever been a father?"

" I would that I had not been."

" Are you not happy, Lanoy?"

" God is my judge."

" Can I not render you any ſervice in this world?"

" None; but think of yourſelf."

" How muſt I do that?"

" You will learn it at Rome."

Immediately a clap of thunder was heard—a thick ſmoke filled the room; and when it cleared up, the figure had vaniſhed. I puſhed open a window-ſhutter—it was day-light.

The conjurer foon recovered his fenfes.

" Where are we ?" he cried, when he faw the day-light.

The Ruffian officer ftood clofe behind him ; and looking over his fhoulder,

" Juggler," he faid, with a piercing frown, " this is the laft time thou wilt ever have it in thy power to fummon another ghoft to appear on earth."

The Sicilian turned haftily round ; and, looking ftedfaftly in his face, uttered a loud fhriek, and fell fenfelefs on the ground. Immediately the pretended Ruffian was difcovered by the Prince to be no other perfon than his myfterious friend the Arminian.

No language can paint the horror this circumftance occafioned in the mind of the Prince, and the conflernation that generally pervaded the company. We ftood motionlefs as we furveyed this awful being, who penetrated us to the foul with his looks. A dead filence reigned for fome minutes: at length feveral loud knocks at the door roufed us from a ftate of ftupefaction. The noife continued, and the door was foon after fhattered in pieces, when feveral police officers, with a guard, rufhed into the hall.

" Here we find them all together," cried the commander, turning to his followers. " In the name of the government," (addreffing himfelf to us) cried he, " I arreft you all."

We had fcarcely time to recollect ourfelves, ere we were all furrounded

by

by the guard. The Ruſſian, whom I ſhall now call the Arminian, took the commander aſide; and notwithſtanding the confuſion we were in, I obſerved that he whiſpered ſomething in his ear, and ſhewed him a paper, at the ſight of which the man bowed reſpectfully and retired—as he paſſed us he took off his hat.

"Forgive me, gentlemen," ſaid he, "for having confounded you with this impoſtor. I will not aſk who you are, this perſon aſſures me that I have men of honour before me."

In the meantime he gave his people a hint to withdraw from us. He commanded them, however, to ſeize the Sicilian, and to bind him.

"This fellow has reigned long enough," added he, "we have been

upon the watch for him thefe feven months."

This miferable wretch was indeed an object of pity. The fudden fright which the fecond apparition occafioned, and the unexpected reproach from the Arminian, had overpowered his fenfes. He fuffered himfelf to be bound without the leaft oppofition. His eyes rolled in his head, and a death-like palenefs fpread itfelf over his countenance, as at intervals he heaved convulfive fighs. Every moment we expected that he would become frantic. The Prince pitied his diftrefs, and undertook to folicit his difcharge from the leader of the police, to whom he difcovered his rank.

"Gracious Prince," faid the officer, "do you know who this man is? and for whom you fo generoufly intercede?

The

The tricks which he practifed to deceive you are the leaft of his crimes. We have already fecured his accomplices, and they have difcovered tranfactions which he has been concerned in of the moft horrid nature. He may think himfelf well off if he efcapes with banifhment to the galleys."

In the meantime we obferved the landlord and his family fettered and led through the yard.

"Is that man guilty?" cried the Prince. "What has he done?"

"He was his accomplice," faid the officer, "and affifted him in his mountebank tricks and robberies, and fhared the fpoil with him. I will convince you immediately, graciousSir, of the truth of my affertion" (turning towards his followers). "Search the houfe," he

cried, " and bring me immediately intelligence as to what you difcover."

The Prince looked for the Arminian, but he was gone. In the confufion which this enexpećted circumftance occafioned, he found means to fteal off without being obferved. The Prince was inconfolable: he determined to fend fervants after him, and alfo fearch for him himfelf; and, hurrying with me to the window, we obferved the whole houfe furrounded by the populace, whom the account of this event had drawn to the fpot.

" It is impoffible to make our way through the crowd," faid I; " and if it is the intention of the Arminian to elude our fearch, he certainly knows the means to do it effećtually: let us rather ftay here a little longer, gracious Sir. Perhaps this officer of the police can

can give us ſome information reſpecting him, to whom he has, if I have rightly obſerved, diſcovered himſelf."

We recollected that we were ſtill in an undreſs, and promiſing to return ſoon, we haſtened into a room to put on our clothes as quick as poſſible. When we came back, the ſearching of the houſe was finiſhed. After they had removed the altar, and forced up the boards of the floor, they diſcovered a vault where a man was able to ſit upright, which was ſeparated by a ſecret door from a narrow ſtair-caſe that led to a gloomy cave. In this abyſs they found an electrical machine, a clock, and a ſmall ſilver bell; which laſt, as well as the electrical machine, had a communication with the altar and the crucific that was fixed upon it. A hole had been made in the window-ſhutter oppoſite the chimney, which opened

opened and ſhut with a ſlide. In this hole, as we learnt afterwards, was fixed a magic lanthorn, from which the figure of the ghoſt had been reflected on the oppoſite wall over the chimney. From the garret and the cave they brought ſeveral drums, to which large leaden bullets were faſtened by ſtrings: theſe had probably been uſed to imitate the roaring of thunder which we had heard. In ſearching the Sicilian's clothes, they found in a caſe, different powders, genuine mercury in vials and boxes, phoſphorus in a glaſs bottle, and a ring, which we immediately knew to be magnetic, becauſe it adhered to a ſteel button that had been placed near to it by accident. In his coat pockets was a roſary, a jew's beard, a dagger, and a pocket piſtol.

" Let us ſee if it is loaded," ſaid one of the watch, and fired up the chimney.

" Jeſus Maria !" cried a voice, which we knew to be the ſame as that we had heard when the firſt ſpirit appeared, and at the ſame inſtant we beheld a bleeding perſon tumbling down the chimney.

" What ! not yet at reſt, poor ghoſt ?" cried the Engliſhman, whilſt we ſtarted back affrighted. " Go to thy grave. Thou haſt appeared what thou waſt not, and now thou wilt be what thou haſt appeared."

" Jeſus Maria ! I am wounded !" replied the man.

The ball had fractured his right leg. Care was immediately taken to have the wound dreſſed.

" But who art thou ?" ſaid the Engliſh lord, " and what evil ſpirit brought thee here ?"

" I am

" I am a poor folitary monk," anfwered the wounded man. " A ftrange gentleman offered me a zechin to—

" Repeat your magical leffon.—And why didft thou not withdraw immediately you had finifhed ?"

" I was waiting for a fignal to continue my fpeech, as had been agreed on between us ; but as this fignal was not given, I was endeavouring to get off, when I found the ladder had been removed."

" And what was the formula he taught thee ?"

The wounded man fainted: nothing more could be got from him. When we obferved his features more minutely, we difcovered him to be the fame man that ftood in the path-way of the Prince the

the evening before, and aſked alms for the Madona. The Prince addreſſed the leader of the watch, giving him at the ſame time ſome pieces of gold.

"You have reſcued us," ſaid he, "from the hands of a deceiver, and done us juſtice even without knowing us—increaſe our gratitude by telling us who the ſtranger was, that, by ſpeaking only a few words, procured us our liberty?"

"Whom do you mean?" aſked the officer, with a countenance which ſeemed to indicate that the queſtion was uſeleſs.

"The gentleman in a Ruſſian uniform, who took you aſide, ſhewed you a written paper, and whiſpered in your ear, in conſequence of which you immediately ſet us free."

"Do

" Do not you know the gentleman?" ſaid the officer. " Was he not one of your company?"

" No," ſaid the Prince ; " and I have very important reaſons for wiſhing to be acquainted with him."

" He is a perfect ſtranger to me too," replied the officer ; " even his name is unknown to me. I ſaw him to-day for the firſt time in my life."

" How ! And was he able in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, and by uſing only a few words, to convince you that we were all innocent ?"

" Undoubtedly, Sire, with a ſingle word."

" And this was ?—I confeſs I wiſh to know it."

" This

" This ſtranger, my Prince," (weighing the zechins in his hand)—" You have been too generous for me to make it any longer a myſtery—This ſtranger is an officer of the Inquiſition."

" Of the Inquiſition!—What! that man?"

" Nothing elſe, my Prince. I was convinced of it by the paper which he ſhewed to me."

" That man did you ſay? It cannot be."

" I will tell you more, my Prince; it was upon his information that I have been ſent here to arreſt the conjurer."

We looked at each other with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment.

" Now

"Now we know," ſaid the Engliſh Lord, "why the poor devil of a ſorcerer ſtarted when he came near his face. He knew him to be a ſpy, and for that reaſon he made ſuch a horrible outcry and threw himſelf at his feet."

"No!" interrupted the Prince. "This man is whatever he wiſhes to be, and whatever the moment requires him to be. No mortal ever knew what he really was. Did not you ſee the knees of the Sicilian ſink under him, when he ſaid, with a terrible voice: "Thou ſhalt no more call a ghoſt." There is ſomething myſterious in this matter. No perſon can perſuade me that one man ſhould be thus alarmed at the ſight of another, without ſome moſt eſſential reaſon."

"The Conjurer will probably explain it the beſt," ſaid the Engliſh Lord,

" if that gentleman (pointing to the officer) will procure us an opportunity of ſpeaking to his priſoner.

The officer conſented to it, and after having agreed with the Engliſhman to viſit the Sicilian in the morning, we returned to Venice *.

Lord Seymour (this was the name of the Engliſhman) called upon us very early in the forenoon, and was ſoon after followed by a perſon whom the officer

* Count O....., whoſe narrative I have thus far literally copied, deſcribes minutely the various effects of this adventure upon the mind of the Prince, and of his companions, and recounts a variety of tales of apparitions, which this event gave occaſion to introduce. I ſhall omit giving them to the reader, on the ſuppoſition that he is as curious as myſelf to know the concluſion of the adventure, and its effects on the conduct of the Prince. I ſhall only add, that the Prince got no ſleep the remainder of the night, and that he waited with impatience for the moment which was to diſcloſe this incomprehenſible myſtery.

had

had intrufted with the care of conducting us to the prifon. I forgot to mention that one of the Prince's domeftics, a native of Bremen, and who had ferved him many years with the ftricteft fidelity, and who poffeffed his confidence, had been miffing for feveral days. Whether he had met with any accident; been kidnapped, or had voluntarily abfented himfelf, was a fecret to every one. The laft fuppofition was extremely improbable, as his conduct had always been regular and irreproachable. All that his companions could recollect, was, that he had been for fometime very melancholy, and that, whenever he had a moment's leifure, he ufed to vifit a certain monaftery in the *Giudecca*, where he had formed an acquaintance with fome monks. This led us to fuppofe that he might have fallen into the hands of the priefts, and had been perfuaded to turn Catholick. The Prince

was indifferent about matters of this kind, and the few enquiries he caufed to be made proving unfuccefsful, he gave up the fearch. He, however, regretted the lofs of this man, who had fo conftantly attended him in his campaigns, had always been faithfully attached to him, and whom it was therefore difficult to replace in a foreign country. The very fame day the Prince's banker, whom he had commiffioned to provide him with another fervant, came at the moment we were going out; he prefented to the Prince a well-dreffed man, of a good appearance, about forty years of age, who had been for a long time fecretary to a procurator; fpoke French and a little German, and was befides furnifhed with the beft recommendations. The Prince was pleafed with the man's phyfiognomy; and as he declared that he would be fatisfied with fuch wages as

his

his ſervice ſhould be found to merit, the Prince engaged him immediately. We found the Sicilian in a private priſon, where, as the keeper aſſured us, he had been lodged for the preſent, to accommodate the Prince, as he was to be confined in future under the lead roofs, to which there is no acceſs. Theſe lead roofs are the moſt terrible dungeons in Venice. They are ſituated on the top of the Palace of St. Mark, and the miſerable criminals ſuffer ſo exceſſively from the heat of the leads, occaſioned by the burning rays of the ſun deſcending directly upon them, that they frequently become diſtracted. The Sicilian had recovered from his terror, and roſe reſpectfully at the ſight of the Prince. He had fetters on one hand and one leg, but he was able to walk about the room. The keeper left the dungeon as ſoon as we had entered.

" I come," ſaid the Prince, " to requeſt an explanation of you on two ſubjects.—You owe me the one, and it ſhall not be to your diſadvantage if you grant me the other."

" My part is now acted," replied the Sicilian. " My deſtiny is in your hands."

" Your ſincerity alone can mitigate your puniſhment."

" Aſk, my Prince, I am ready to anſwer you. I have nothing more to loſe."

" You ſhewed me the face of the Arminian in your looking-glaſs.—How was it done ?"

" What you ſaw was no looking-glaſs—a portrait in paſtel behind a glaſs, repreſenting a man in an Arminian dreſs, deceived you. The want of light, your aſtoniſh-

aftonifhment, and my own dexterity, favoured the deception. The picture itfelf muft have been found among the other things feized at the inn."

"But how came you fo well acquainted with my ideas as to hit upon the Arminian?"

"This was not difficult, my Prince. You have perhaps frequently mentioned your adventure with the Arminian at table, in prefence of your domeftics. One of my fervants got accidentally acquainted with one of yours in the Giudecca, and foon learned from him as much as I wifhed to know."

"Where is this man?" afked the Prince; "I mifs him, and in all probability you are acquainted with the place of his retreat, and the reafon why he deferted my fervice."

" I ſwear to you, gracious Sir, that I know not the leaſt of him. I have never ſeen him myſelf, nor had any other concern with him than the one before-mentioned."

" Go on," ſaid the Prince.

" By this means alſo, I received the firſt information of your reſidence, and of your adventures at Venice ; and I reſolved immediately to profit by them. Your Highneſs ſees that I am ingenuous. I was apprized of your intended excurſion on the Brenta—I was prepared for it: and a key, that dropped by chance from your pocket, afforded me the firſt opportunity of trying my art upon you."

" How! Have I been miſtaken? The adventure of the key then was a trick of yours, and not of the Armenian?

nian?—You fay this key fell from my pocket?"

"You accidentally dropped it in taking out your purfe, and I inftantly covered it with my foot. The perfon of whom you bought the lottery-ticket was in concert with me. He caufed you to draw it from a box where there was no blank, and the key had been in the fnuff-box long before it came into your poffeffion."

"It is almoft incomprehenfible— And the monk who ftopped me in my way, and addreffed me in a manner fo folemn—"

"Was the fame that I hear has been wounded in the chimney. He is one of my accomplices, and under that difguife has rendered me many important fervices."

" But what purpofe was this intended to anfwer?"

" To render you thoughtful: to infpire you with fuch a train of ideas as fhould be favourable to the wonders I intended to make you believe."

" The pantomimical dance, which ended in a manner fo extraordinary, was at leaft none of your contrivance."

" I had taught the girl who reprefented the queen. Her performance was the refult of my inftructions. I fuppofed your Highnefs would not be a little aftonifhed to find yourfelf known in this place, and (I entreat your Highnefs's pardon) your adventure with the Armenian gave room for me to hope that you were already difpofed to reject natural interpretations, and to fearch for the marvellous."

 " Indeed!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Prince, at once angry and amazed, and casting upon me a significant look—"Indeed, I did not expect this*. But," continued he, after a long silence, "how did you produce the figure that appeared on the wall over the chimney?"

"By means of a magic lantern that was fixed in the opposite window-shut-

* Nor in all probability did my readers. The circumstance of the crown deposited at the feet of the Prince, in a manner so unexpected and extraordinary, and the former prediction of the Armenian, seemed so naturally and so obviously to aim at the same object, that at the first reading of these memoirs, I immediately remembered the deceitful speech of the Witches in the play of Macbeth:

"All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
"All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!"

When a particular idea has once entered the mind, it necessarily connects with itself every subsequent idea that seems to have the least affinity to it.

ter,

ter, in which you have, no doubt, obſerved an opening."

"And how did it happen that none of us perceived the lantern?" aſked Lord Seymour.

"You remember, my Lord, that on your re-entering the room, it was darkened by a thick ſmoke of olive wood. I uſed likewiſe the precaution to place upright againſt the wall near the window, the boards which had been taken up from the floor. By theſe means I prevented the ſhutter from coming immediately under your ſight. Moreover, the lantern remained covered until you had taken your places, and until there was no further reaſon to apprehend any examination from the perſons in the hall."

"As I looked out of the window in the other pavilion," ſaid I, "I heard a noiſe

a noife like that of a perfon who was in the act of placing a ladder againft the fide of the houfe. Was it really fo?"

"Yes, my affiftant ftood upon this ladder to direct the magic-lantern."

"The apparition," continued the Prince, "had really a fuperficial likenefs to my deceafed friend;" and what was particularly ftriking, his hair, which was of a very light colour, was exactly imitated. Was this mere chance, or how did you come by fuch a refemblance?"

"Your Highnefs muft recollect, that you had at table a fnuff-box laid by your plate, with an enamelled portrait of an officer in a French uniform. I afked whether you had any thing about you as a memorial of your friend. Your Highnefs anfwered in the affirmative. I conjectured it might be the box. I had atten-

attentively confidered the picture during fupper, and being very expert in drawing, and not lefs happy in taking likeneffes, I had no difficulty in giving to my fhade the fuperficial refemblance you have perceived, becaufe the Marquis's features are very ftriking."

"But the figure feemed to move?"

"It appeared fo, yet it was not the figure, but the fmoke which received its light."

"And the man who fell down in the chimney fpoke for the apparition?"

"He did."

"But he could not hear your queftions diftinctly."

"There was no occafion for it. Your Highnefs will recollect, that I ordered you

all very ſtrictly not to propoſe any queſtion yourſelves to the apparition. My enquiries and his anſwers were pre-concerted between us; and that no miſtake might happen, I cauſed him to ſpeak at long intervals, which he counted by the beating of a watch."

"You ordered the innkeeper carefully to extinguiſh every fire in the houſe. This was, undoubtedly—"

"To ſave the man from the danger of being ſmothered; becauſe the chimnies in the houſe communicate with each other, and I did not think myſelf very ſecure from your retinue."

"How did it happen," aſked Lord Seymour, "that your ghoſt appeared neither ſooner nor later than you wiſhed him?"

"The ghoſt was in the room for ſome time before I called him; but while the room was lighted, the ſhade was too faint to be perceived. When the formula of the conjuration was finiſhed, I cauſed the cover of the box, in which the ſpirit was burning, to drop down; the hall was darkened; and it was not till then that the figure on the wall could be diſtinctly ſeen, although it had been reflected there a conſiderable time before."

"When the ghoſt appeared, we all felt an electrical ſtroke. How was that managed?"

"You have diſcovered the machine under the altar. You have alſo ſeen, that I was ſtanding upon a ſilk carpet. I ordered you to form a half moon around me, and to take hold of each other's hand. When the criſis ap-

 proached,

proached, I gave a ſign to one of you to ſeize me by the hair. The ſilver crucifix was the conductor, and you felt the electrical ſhock when I touched it with my hand."

"You ordered Count O.... and myſelf," continued Lord Seymour, "to hold two naked ſwords acroſs over your head, during the whole time of the conjuration; for what purpoſe?"

"For no other than to engage your attention during the operation; becauſe I diſtruſted you two the moſt. You remember, that I expreſsly commanded you to hold the ſwords one inch above my head; by confining you exactly to this diſtance, I prevented you from looking where I did not wiſh you. I had not then perceived my principal enemy."

"I own,"

"I own," said Lord Seymour, "you acted cautiously; but why were we obliged to appear undressed?"

"Merely to give a greater solemnity to the scene, and to fill your imaginations with the idea of something extraordinary."

"The second apparition prevented your ghost from speaking," said the Prince; "what should we have learnt from him?"

"Nearly the same as what you heard afterwards. It was not without design that I asked your Highness whether you had told me every thing that the deceased communicated to you, and whether you had made any further enquiries on this subject in his country? I thought this was necessary, in order to prevent the deposition of the ghost

from being contradicted by facts that you were previoufly acquainted with. Knowing likewife that every man, efpecially in his youth, is liable to error, I enquired whether the life of your friend had been irreproachable, and on your anfwer I founded that of the ghoft."

"Your explanation of this matter is in fome meafure fatisfactory; but there remains yet one material circumftance which I muft infift upon being cleared up."

"If it be in my power, and—"

"I fhall not liften to any conditions. Juftice, into whofe hands you are fallen, ought not, perhaps, to deal with you fo delicately. Who was the man at whofe feet we faw you fall? What do you know of him? How did you get acquainted with him? and what do you know of the fecond apparition?

"Your

" Your Highneſs. . . . ."

" Heſitate not a moment. Recollect, that on looking at the Ruſſian officer attentively, you ſcreamed aloud, and fell on your knees before him. What are we to underſtand by that?"

" That man, my Prince. . . . . ." He ſtopped, grew viſibly pale and perplexed, and, looking around him with an awful trepidation—" Yes, your Highneſs," he continued, " that man is a terrible being."

" What do you know of him? What connection have you with him? Do not conceal the truth from us."

" I will not; but—I am not certain that he is not among us at this very moment?"

" Where?

" Where? Who!" exclaimed we all together, looking fearfully about the room. " It is impoſſible."

" That man, or whatever elſe he may be, is a being incomprehenſible; all things ſeem poſſible for him to do."

" Who is he? Whence does he come? Is he Armenian or Ruſſian? Of the characters he aſſumes, which is his real one."

" He is not what he appears to be. There are few conditions or countries in which he has not worn the maſk. No perſon knows who he is, whence he comes, or whither he goes. Some ſay he has been for a long time in Egypt, and that he has brought from thence, out of a catacomb, his occult ſciences. Here we only know him by the name

of

of the Incomprehenſible. How old, for inſtance, do you think he is?"

"To judge from his appearance, he can ſcarcely have paſſed forty."

"And of what age do you ſuppoſe I am?"

"Not far from fifty."

"Well, and I muſt tell you, that I was but a boy of ſeventeen, when my grandfather ſpoke to me of this extraordinary man, whom he had ſeen at Famaguſta; at which time he appeared nearly of the ſame age as he does at preſent."

"Impoſſible," ſaid the Prince; "it is ridiculous, and incredible."

"By no means, Sir. Were I not prevented by theſe fetters, I could produce

duce vouchers that would readily confirm my aſſertion. There are ſeveral credible perſons who remember having ſeen him, each at the ſame time, in different parts of the globe. No ſword can wound—no poiſon hurt—no fire burn him—no veſſel in which he embarks can be ſhipwrecked or ſunk : time itſelf ſeems to have no influence over him ; years do not affect his conſtitution, nor age whiten his hair. He was never ſeen to take any food. Never did he approach a woman. No ſleep cloſes his eyes. Of the twenty-four hours in the day, there is only one which he cannot command, during which no perſon ever ſaw him, and during which he never was employed in any terreſtrial occupation."

"And this hour is—"

"That of midnight. When the clock ſtrikes twelve, he ceaſes to belong to the

the living. In whatever place he is, he muſt immediately be gone; whatever buſineſs he is engaged in, he muſt inſtantly leave it. That dreadful hour tears him from the arms of friendſhip, hurries him from the ſacred altar, and would, even in the agonies of death, drag him from his bed. His haunt has never been diſcovered, nor his engagements at that hour known. No perſon ventures to interrogate, and ſtill leſs to follow him. As the hour approaches, his features are enveloped in the gloom of melancholy, and ſo terrifying that no perſon has courage to look him in the face or to ſpeak a word to him. However lively the converſation may have been, a dead ſilence immediately ſucceeds it, and all around him wait for his return in awful horror, without venturing to quit their ſeats, or to open the door through which he has paſſed."

" Does nothing extraordinary appear in his perfon when he returns ?"

" Nothing, except that he feems pale and languid, nearly in the ftate of a man who has juft fuffered a painful operation, or received difaftrous intelligence. Some pretend to have feen drops of blood on his linen, but with what degree of veracity I cannot affirm."

" Did no perfon ever attempt to conceal the approach of this hour from him, or endeavour to engage him in fuch diverfions as might make him forget it?"

" Once only, it is faid, he paffed the fatal hour. The company was numerous, and remained together until late at night. All the clocks and watches were purpofely fet wrong, and the warmth of converfation diverted

verted his attention. When the moment arrived, he ſuddenly became ſilent and motionleſs; his limbs continued in the poſition in which this inſtant had arreſted them; his eyes were fixed, his pulſe ceaſed to beat; all the means employed to awake him proved fruitleſs, and this ſituation endured till the hour had elapſed; he then revived on a ſudden, and continued his ſpeech from the ſame ſyllable that he was pronouncing at the moment of interruption. The general conſternation diſcovered to him what had happened; and he declared, with an awful ſolemnity, that they ought to think themſelves happy in having eſcaped with no other injury than fear. The ſame night he quitted for ever the place where this circumſtance had occurred. The common opinion is, that during this myſterious hour he converſes with his attendant ſpirits. Some even ſuppoſe him to be one of the departed, who

who is allowed to pafs twenty-three hours of the day among the living, and that in the twenty-fourth his foul is obliged to return to the infernal regions to fuffer its punifhment. Some believe him to be the famous Apollonius of Tyana *, and others the difciple of St. John the Baptift, of whom it

* Apollonius, a Pythagorean philofopher, was born at Tyana, in Capadocia, about three or four years before the birth of Chrift. At fixteen years of age he became a ftrict obferver of Pythagorean rules, renouncing wine, women, and all forts of flefh; not wearing fhoes, letting his hair grow, and clothing himfelf with nothing but linen. He foon after fet up for a reformer of mankind, and chofe his habitation in the temple of Efculapius, where he is faid to have performed many miraculous cures. On his coming of age, he gave part of his wealth to his eldeft brother, diftributed another part to fome poor relations, and kept very little for himfelf. There are numberlefs fabulous ftories recounted of him. He went five years without fpeaking, and yet, during this time, he ftopped many feditions in Cicilia and Pamphylia. He travelled, fet up for a legiflator, and gave out that he underftood all languages

it is ſaid that he ſhall remain wandering on the earth until the day of judgment."

"A character ſo wonderful," replied the Prince, "cannot fail to give riſe to extraordinary conjectures. But all this you profeſs to know only by hearſay; and yet this behaviour to you, and yours to him, ſeemed to indicate a more intimate acquaintance. Is it not founded

languages without having ever learned them. He could tell the thoughts of men, and underſtood the oracles which birds delivered by their ſinging. The Heathens oppoſed the pretended miracles of this man to thoſe of our Saviour, and gave the preference to this philoſopher. After having for a long time impoſed upon the world, and gained a great number of diſciples, he died in a very advanced age about the end of the firſt century. His life, which is filled with abſurdities, was written by Philoſtratus, and M. du Pin has publiſhed a confutation of Apollonius's life, in which he proves, that the miracles of this pretended philoſopher carry ſtrong marks of falſehood, and that there is not one which may not be aſcribed to chance or artifice. Apollonius himſelf wrote ſome works, which are now loſt.

upon

upon ſome particular event, in which yourſelf have been concerned? Conceal nothing from us."

The Sicilian remained ſilent, as if uncertain whether he ſhould ſpeak or not.

"If it concern any thing," ſaid the Prince, "that you do not wiſh to publiſh, I promiſe you by my honour, and before theſe gentlemen, the moſt inviolable ſecreſy; but ſpeak openly, and without reſerve."

"Could I hope," anſwered the priſoner at laſt, "that you would not produce theſe gentlemen as evidence againſt me, I would tell you a remarkable adventure of this Armenian, to which I myſelf was witneſs, and which will leave you no doubt of his ſupernatural powers. But I beg leave to conceal ſome names."

"Cannot you do it without this condition?"

"No, your Highneſs: there is a family concerned in it which I muſt reſpect."

"Let us hear then?"

"Above five years ago, being at Naples, where I practiſed my art with ſucceſs, I became acquainted with a perſon of the name of Lorenzo del M.... chevalier of the order of St. Stephen, a young and rich nobleman of one of the firſt families in the kingdom, who loaded me with civilities, and ſeemed to have a great eſteem for my occult ſcience. He told me, that the Marquis del M.... his father, was a zealous admirer of the cabbala*, and

* Cabbala is properly a myſterious kind of ſcience delivered by revelation to the ancient Jews, and tranſmitted by oral tradition to thoſe of our times; ſerving

and would think himfelfh ap py in having a philofopher like me (for fuch he was pleafed to call me) under his roof. The Marquis refided in one of his country feats on the fea fhore, about feven miles from Naples; and there, almoft entirely fecluded from the world, he mourned the lofs of a beloved fon, of whom he had been deprived by a fatal and melancholy accident. The

ferving for the interpretation of difficult paffages in fcripture, and to difcover future events by the combination of particular words, letters, and numbers. It is likewife termed the oral law. But Cabbala, among the Chriftians, is alfo applied to the ufe, or rather abufe, which vifionaries and enthufiafts make of fcripture for difcovering futurity, by the ftudy and confideration of the combination of certain words, letters, and numbers in the facred writings. All the words, terms, magic characters, or figures, with ftones and talifmans, numbers, letters, charms, &c. in magic operations, are comprifed under this fpecies of Cabbala, and the word is ufed for any kind of magic, on account of the refemblance this art bears to the Jewifh Cabbala. The Jews, however, never ufe the word in any fuch fenfe, but always with the utmoft refpect and veneration.

Chevalier gave me to underſtand, that he and his family might perhaps have occaſion to employ my ſecret arts in obtaining ſome very important intelligence, to procure which every natural means had been exhauſted in vain. He added, with a very ſignificant look, that he himſelf might perhaps at ſome future period conſider me as the author of all his earthly happineſs. I did not chooſe to preſs him for an explanation. The affair was as follows: " Lorenzo, being the youngeſt ſon of the Marquis, had been deſtined for the church. The family eſtates were to devolve to the eldeſt. Jeronymo, which was the name of the latter, had ſpent many years on his travels, and returned to his country about ſeven years prior to the event which I am about to relate, in order to celebrate his marriage with the only daughter of a neighbouring count. This marriage had been determined on by the

parents during the infancy of the children, in order to unite the very large fortunes of the two houſes. But though this agreement was made by the two families without conſulting the hearts of the parties concerned, the latter had ſecretly entertained an affection for each other. Jeronymo del M. . . and Antonia C. . . had been always brought up together, and the little conſtraint impoſed on two children, whom their parents were already accuſtomed to regard as united, ſoon produced between them a connection of the tendereſt kind. The congeniality of their tempers cemented this intimacy, and in riper years it matured inſenſibly into love. An abſence of four years, far from cooling this paſſion, had only ſerved to inflame it, and Jeronymo returned to the arms of his intended bride as faithful and as ardent as if they had never been ſeparated. The raptures occaſioned by his return

return had not fubfided, nor the preparations for the happy day difcontinued, when Jeronymo difappeared. He ufed frequently to pafs the afternoon in a fummer-houfe which commanded a profpect of the fea, and was accuftomed to take the diverfion of failing on the water. One day, when he was at his favourite retirement, it was obferved that he remained a much longer time than ufual without returning, and his friends began to be very uneafy on his account. Boats were difpatched after him, veffels were fent to fea in queft of him—no perfon had feen him—none of his fervants could have attended him, for none of them were abfent—night came on, and he did not appear. The next morning dawned—the day paffed—the evening fucceeded—Jeronymo came not. Already had they begun to give themfelves up to the moft melancholy conjectures,

 when

when the news arrived, that an Algerine pirate had landed the preceding day on that coaſt, and carried off ſeveral of the inhabitants. Two galleys, ready equipped, were immediately ordered to ſea. The old Marquis himſelf embarked in one of them, to attempt the deliverance of his ſon at the peril of his own life. On the third day they perceived the corſair. The wind was favourable—they were juſt about to overtake him, and even approached ſo near to him, that Lorenzo, who was in one of the gallies, fancied that he ſaw, upon the deck of the adverſary's ſhip, a ſignal made by his brother, when a ſudden ſtorm ſeparated the veſſels. Hardly could the almoſt ſhipwrecked galleys ſuſtain the fury of the tempeſt. The pirate, in the meantime had diſappeared, and the diſtreſſed ſtate of the other veſſels obliged them to put into Malta. The affliction of the family was beyond all bounds.

The

The diftracted old Marquis tore his grey hairs in the utmoft violence of grief, and the life of the young Countefs was defpaired of. Five years were confumed after this event in fruitlefs enquiries; diligent fearch was made all along the coaft of Barbary; and immenfe fums were offered for the ranfom of the young Marquis, but to no purpofe. The only conjecture which could be founded on probability was, that the fame ftorm which had feparated the galleys from the pirate had deftroyed the latter veffel, and that the whole fhip's company had perifhed in the waves. But this fuppofition, however probable, as it did not by any means amount to a certainty, could not authorize the family to renounce the hope that the abfent Jeronymo might again appear. In cafe however that he did not, either the family's name muft be fuffered to perifh, or the youngeft fon muft relinquifh the church, and en-

ter into the rights of the eldeſt. Juſtice ſeemed to oppoſe the latter meaſure; and on the other hand, the neceſſity of preſerving the family from annihilation required that the ſcruple ſhould not be carried too far. In the meantime, ſorrow, added to the weight of age, was bringing the Marquis faſt to his grave. Every unſuccefsful attempt ſerved to increaſe his diſtreſs, and diminiſh the hope of finding his loſt ſon. He ſaw that his name might be perpetuated by acting with a little injuſtice, in conſenting to favour his younger ſon at the expence of the elder. The fulfilment of his agreement with Count C. . . . required only the change of a name; for the object of the two families was equally accompliſhed, whether Antonia became the wife of Lorenzo or of Jeronymo. The faint probability of the latter's appearing again weighed but little againſt the certain and preſſing danger of the

total

total extinction of the family; and the old Marquis, who considered his dissolution fast approaching, ardently wished to die free from this inquietude. Lorenzo alone, who was to be principally benefited by this measure, opposed it with the greatest obstinacy. He resisted with equal firmness the allurements of an immense fortune, and the attractions of a beautiful and accomplished object ready to be delivered into his arms. He refused, on principles the most generous and conscientious, to invade the rights of a brother, who for any thing he knew might himself be in a capacity to resume them.

"Is not the lot of my Jeronymo," said he, "made sufficiently miserable by the horrors of a long captivity, without the aggravation of being deprived for ever of all that he holds most dear? With what conscience could I suppli-

cate Heaven for his return, when his wife is in my arms? With what countenance could I meet him, if at laft he fhould be reftored to us by a miracle? And even fuppofing that he is torn from us for ever, can we honour his memory better than by keeping conftantly open the chafm which his death has caufed in our circle? Can we better fhew our refpects to him than by facrificing our deareft hopes upon his tomb, and keeping untouched as a facred depofit, what was peculiarly his own."

But thefe arguments of fraternal delicacy could not reconcile the old Marquis to the idea of being obliged to witnefs the decay of a tree which nine centuries had beheld flourifhing. All that Lorenzo could obtain was a delay of two years. During this period they continued their enquiries with the utmoft diligence. Lorenzo himfelf

made

made ſeveral voyages, and expoſed his perſon to many dangers. No trouble, no expence, was ſpared to recover the loſt Jeronymo. Theſe two years, however, like thoſe which preceded them, were conſumed in vain.

"And Antonia," ſaid the Prince. "You tell us nothing of her. Could ſhe ſo calmly ſubmit to her fate? I cannot ſuppoſe it."

"Antonia," anſwered the Sicilian, "experienced the moſt violent ſtruggle between duty and inclination, between diſlike and admiration. The diſintereſted generoſity of a brother affected her. She felt herſelf forced to eſteem a perſon whom ſhe could never love. Her heart, torn by contrary ſentiments, felt the bittereſt diſtreſs; but her repugnance to the Chevalier ſeemed to increaſe in the ſame degree as his

claims upon her efteem augmented. Lorenzo perceived with heartfelt forrow the fecret grief that confumed her youth. An unconquerable fympathy for her misfortune infenfibly eradicated that indifference with which till then we had been accuftomed to confider her. But this delufive fentiment deceived him, and an ungovernable paffion began rapidly to fhake the fteadinefs of his virtue, which till then had been unequalled. He, however, ftill obeyed the dictates of generofity, though at the expence of his love. By his efforts alone was the unfortunate victim protected againft the cruel and arbitrary proceedings of the reft of the family. But his endeavours were ineffectual. Every victory he gained over his paffion rendered him more worthy of Antonia, and the difintereftednefs with which he refufed her, left her without an apology for refiftance. Thus were affairs fituated,

ated, when the Chevalier engaged me to viſit him at his father's villa. The earneſt recommendation of my patron procured me a reception which exceeded my moſt ſanguine wiſhes. I muſt not forget to mention, that by ſome remarkable operations I had previouſly rendered my name famous in different lodges of free-maſons. This circumſtance perhaps contributed to ſtrengthen the old Marquis's confidence in me, and to heighten his expectations. I beg you will excuſe me from deſcribing particularly the lengths I went with him, or the means which I employed. You may form ſome judgment of them from what I have before confeſſed to you. Profiting by the myſtic books which I found in his very extenſive library, I was ſoon able to ſpeak to him in his own language, and to adorn my ſyſtem of the inviſible world with the moſt

extraordinary inventions. He was therefore with ſo little difficulty induced to credit the fables I taught him, that in a ſhort time he would have believed as implicitly in the ſecret commerce of philoſophers and ſylphs as in any article of the canon. The Marquis, being very religious, had acquired in the ſchool of theology a facility of belief, which cauſed him at once to be faſcinated with the ſtories I told him, and to put the moſt unreſerved confidence in my character. At length I entangled him ſo completely in myſtery, that he would no longer believe any thing that was natural. In ſhort, I became the adored apoſtle of the houſe. The uſual ſubject of my lectures was the exaltation of human nature, and the intercourſe of men with ſuperior things; the infallible Count Gabolis * was my oracle.

* A myſtical work written in French by the Abbe de Villars.

Antonia,

Antonia, whofe mind fince the lofs of her lover had been more occupied in the world of fpirits, than in that of nature, and who had a ftrong tincture of melancholy in her compofition, caught every hint I gave her with a fearful fatisfaction. Even the fervants contrived to have fome bufinefs in the room when I was fpeaking, and, feizing part of my converfation, formed from it myfterious prefages.—Two months were paffed in this manner at the Marquis's villa, when the Chevalier one morning entered my apartment—His features had experienced a confiderable alteration, and from his forrowful countenance I fufpected that fomething preyed upon his mind.—He threw himfelf upon a couch with every fymptom of defpair.

"I am diftracted, ruined," faid he; "I muft, I cannot fupport it any longer."

"What is the matter with you, Chevalier? What has befallen you?"

"Oh! this terrible paſſion!" ſaid he, ſtarting from his ſeat, and throwing himſelf into my arms. "I have combated againſt it like a man, but can reſiſt it no longer."

"And whoſe fault is it but your own, my dear Chevalier? Are they not all willing to gratify this paſſion? Your father! Your relations!"

"My father, my relations! What are they to me? I want not to be united to her by force—Have not I a rival? Alas! and what a rival! Perhaps a dead one! Oh! let me go, let me go to the end of the world; I muſt find my brother."

"What! after ſo many unſucceſsful attempts, have you ſtill any hope?"

"Hope!

"Hope! Alas, no. It has long ſince been baniſhed from my heart, but it has not from her's; of what conſequence are my ſentiments? Is it poſſible that I ſhould be happy whilſt there remains a gleam of hope in Antonia's breaſt? Two words, my friend, would end my torments, but in vain; my deſtiny muſt continue to be miſerable, till eternity ſhall break its long ſilence, and the grave ſhall ſpeak in my behalf."

"Is it then a ſtate of certainty that would render you happy?"

"Happy! Alas! I doubt whether I ſhall ever be happy again; but uncertainty is of all others the moſt dreadful affliction."

After a ſhort interval of ſilence, he continued with an emotion leſs violent:

" If he could fee my torments! Surely a conftancy which renders his brother miferable cannot add to his happinefs! Can it be juft, that the living fhould fuffer fo much for the fake of the dead; that I fhould fruitlefsly pine for an object which Jeronymo can no longer enjoy? If he knew the pangs I fuffer, (faid he, concealing his face while the tears ftreamed from his eyes) perhaps he himfelf would conduct her to my arms."

" But is there no poffibility of gratifying your wifhes?"

" He ftarted! What do you fay, my friend?"

" Lefs important occafions than the prefent," faid I, " have difturbed the repofe of the dead for the fake of the living; is not the terreftrial happinefs of a man, of a brother—"

" The

" The terreftrial happinefs! Ah, my friend, I feel but too fenfibly the force of your expreffion—my entire felicity!"

" And the tranquillity of a diftreffed family, are not thefe fufficient to juftify fuch a meafure? Undoubtedly, if any fublunary concern can authorize us to interrupt the peace of the bleffed, to make ufe of a power—"

" For God's fake, my friend!" faid he, interrupting me, " no more of this—once, I avow it, I had fuch a thought; I think I mentioned it to you; but I have long fince rejected it as horrid and abominable."

" You will have conjectured already," continued the Sicilian, " to what this converfation led us; I endeavoured to overcome the fcruples of the Chevalier, and at laft fucceeded.—We refolved to call

call the ghoſt of the deceaſed Jeronymo; I only ſtipulated for a delay of a fortnight, in order, as I pretended, to prepare, in a ſuitable manner, for an act ſo ſolemn.—The time being expired, and my machinery in readineſs, I took advantage of a very gloomy day, when we were all aſſembled as uſual, to communicate the affair to the family, and not only brought them to conſent to it, but even to make it a ſubject of their own requeſt.—The moſt difficult part of the taſk was to obtain the approbation of Antonia, whoſe preſence was eſſential.—My endeavours were, however, greatly aſſiſted by the melancholy turn of her mind, and perhaps ſtill more ſo, by a faint hope, that Jeronymo might ſtill be living, and therefore would not appear.—A want of confidence in the thing itſelf was the only obſtacle which I had to remove.—Having obtained the conſent of the family, the third day was fixed

fixed on for the operation; I prepared then for the folemn tranfaction, by myftical inftruction, fafting, folitude and prayers, which I ordered to be continued till late in the night.—Much ufe was alfo made of a certain mufical inftrument*, unknown till that time; and, in fuch cafes, it has often been found very powerful.—The effect of thefe artifices was fo much beyond my expectation, that the enthufiafm which on this occafion I was obliged to fhew, was infinitely heightened by that of my audience.—The long expected moment at laft arrived.

"I guefs," faid the Prince, "whom you are now going to introduce.—But go on, go on."

"Your Highnefs is miftaken.—The deception fucceeded according to my wifhes."

* The Eolian harp.

"How!

" How! Where then is the Armenian?"

" Your Highnefs's patience: he will appear but too foon. I omit the defcription of the juggling farce itfelf, as it would be too tedious to relate.—It is fufficient to fay, that it anfwered my expectation; the old Marquis, the young Countefs, her mother, Lorenzo, and feveral other perfons of the family were prefent.—You will imagine, that during my long refidence in the houfe I took all opportunities of gathering information refpecting every thing that concerned the deceafed.—Several of his portraits enabled me to give the apparition a ftriking likenefs; and as I fuffered the ghoft to fpeak only by figns, that the found of his voice might excite no fufpicion, the departed Jeronymo appeared in the drefs of a Moorifh Slave, with a deep wound in his neck.—You obferve,

obferve, that in this refpect I was counteracting the general fuppofition that he had perifhed in the waves, I had reafon to hope, that this unexpected circumftance would heighten the belief in the apparition itfelf; for nothing appeared to me more dangerous than to be too natural."

"I think you judged well," faid the Prince; "in whatever refpects apparitions, the moft probable is the leaft acceptable. If their communications are eafily comprehended, we undervalue the channel by which they are obtained; nay, we even fufpect the reality of the miracle, if the difcoveries which it brings to light are fuch as might eafily have been imagined.— Why fhould we difturb the repofe of a fpirit, to inform us of nothing more than the ordinary powers of the intellect are capable of teaching us?—

But, on the other hand, if the intelligence which we receive be extraordinary and unexpected, it confirms, in ſome degree, the miracle by which it is obtained; for who can doubt an operation to be ſupernatural, when its effect could not be produced by natural means? I have interrupted you," added the Prince. "Proceed in your narrative."

"I aſked the ghoſt, whether there was any thing in this world which he ſtill conſidered as his own, and whether he had left any thing behind that was particularly dear to him? The ghoſt thrice ſhook his head, and lifted up his hands towards heaven. Previous to his retiring, he dropt a ring from his finger, which was found on the floor after he had diſappeared; Antonia took it, and, looking at it attentively, ſhe knew it to be the wedding-ring ſhe had preſented to her intended huſband."

" The wedding-ring !" exclaimed the Prince, with furprife. " How did you get it ?"

" Who ?—I !—It was not the true one !—I procured it.—It was only a counterfeit."

" A counterfeit !" repeated the Prince. But in order to counterfeit, you muft have been in poffeffion of the true one. How did you come at it ? Surely the deceafed never went without it."

" That is true," replied the Sicilian, apparently confufed. " But, from a defcription which was given me of the original wedding-ring——"

" A defcription which was given you ! by whom ?"

" Long before that time. It was a plain gold ring, and had, I believe, the

name

name of the young Countefs engraved on it. But you made me lofe the connection."

"What happened farther?" faid the Prince, with a very diffatisfied countenance.

"The family fancied themfelves convinced that Jeronymo was no more. From that very day they publicly announced his death, and went into mourning. The circumftance of the ring left no doubt even in the mind of Antonia, and added a confiderable weight to the addreffes of the Chevalier.

"In the mean time, the violent impreffion which the young Countefs had received from the fight of the apparition brought on her a diforder fo dangerous, that the hopes of Lorenzo were very near being deftroyed for ever. On her recovering,

recovering, ſhe inſiſted upon taking the veil; and it was only by the ſerious remonſtrances of her confeſſor, in whom ſhe placed an implicit confidence, that ſhe was brought to abandon her project. At length, the united ſolicitations of the family, aided by the confeſſor, wreſted from her the deſired conſent. The laſt day of mourning was fixed on for the day of marriage, and the old Marquis determined to add to the ſolemnity of the occaſion, by reſigning all his eſtates to his lawful heir. The day arrived, and Lorenzo received his trembling bride at the altar. In the evening, a ſplendid banquet was prepared for the gueſts, in a hall ſuperbly illuminated. The moſt lively and delightful muſic contributed to increaſe the general joy of the aſſembly. The venerable Marquis wiſhed all the world to participate in his felicity. The gates of the palace were thrown open, and every one that came in was

joyfully welcomed. In the midſt of the throng"—The Sicilian pauſed—A trembling expectation ſuſpended our breath.

"In the midſt of the throng," continued the priſoner, "appeared a Franciſcan monk, to whom my attention was directed by a perſon who ſat next to me at table.

"He was ſtanding motionleſs like a marble pillar. His ſhape was tall and thin; his face pale and ghaſtly; his aſpect grave and mournful; and his eyes were fixed on the new-married couple. The joy which beamed on the face of every one preſent, appeared not on his. His countenance never once varied.—He ſeemed like a ſtatue among living perſons. Such an object, appearing amidſt the general joy, ſtruck me more forcibly from its contraſt with every

thing

thing around me. It left on my mind fo durable an impreffion, that from it alone I have been enabled (which would otherwife have been impoffible) to recollect in the Ruffian officer the features of this Francifcan monk; for without doubt you muft have already conceived, that the perfon I have defcribed was no other than your Armenian. I frequently attempted to withdraw my eyes from this figure, but they returned involuntarily, and found him always unaltered. I pointed him out to the perfon who fat neareft to me on the other fide, and he did the fame to the perfon next to him. In a few minutes, a general curiofity and aftonifhment pervaded the whole company. The converfation languifhed; a general filence fucceeded; nor did the monk interrupt it. He continued motionlefs, and always the fame; his grave and mournful looks conftantly fixed upon the new-

married couple:—His appearance ſtruck every one with terror. The young Counteſs alone, who found the tranſcript of her own ſorrow in the face of the ſtranger, beheld with a ſullen ſatiſfaction the only object that ſeemed to ſympathize in her ſufferings. The crowd inſenſibly diminiſhed, for it was paſt midnight. The muſic became faint and languid; the tapers grew dim, and many of them went out. The converſation, declining by degrees, loſt itſelf at laſt in ſecret murmurs, and the faintly illuminated hall was nearly deſerted. The monk, in the mean time, continued motionleſs, his grave and mournful look ſtill fixed on the new-married couple. The company at length roſe from the table. The gueſts diſperſed. The family aſſembled in a ſeparate group, and the Monk, though uninvited, continued near them. How it happened that no perſon ſpoke to him, I cannot conceive.

"The

"The female friends now surrounded the trembling bride, who cast a supplicating and distressed look on the awful stranger; but he did not answer it. The gentlemen assembled in the same manner around the bridegroom. A solemn and anxious silence prevailed among them.

"At length—"How happy we are here together!" said the old Marquis, who alone seemed not to behold the stranger, or at least seemed to behold him without dismay:—"How happy we are here together, and my son Jeronymo cannot be with us!"

"Have you not invited him, and did not he answer your invitation?"—asked the Monk.

" It was the firſt time he had ſpoken. We looked at him alarmed.

" Alas! he is gone to a place whence there is no return,"—anſwered the old man.—" Reverend father! You miſunderſtood me. My ſon Jeronymo is dead."

" Perhaps he only fears to appear in this company,"—replied the Monk.— " Who knows how your ſon Jeronymo may be ſituated? Let him now hear the voice which he heard the laſt. Deſire your ſon Lorenzo to call him."

" What does he mean?" whiſpered the company one to another.

" Lorenzo changed colour. My own hair almoſt ſtood erect on my head. In the mean time the Monk approach-

ed

ed a fideboard. He took a glafs of wine, and bringing it to his lips,—"To the memory of our dear Jeronymo!" faid he; "Every one who loved the deceafed will follow my example."

"Wherever you come from, reverend father," exclaimed the old Marquis—"you have pronounced a dearly beloved name, and you are welcome here;" then turning to us, he offered us full glaffes—"Come, my friends! let us not be furpaffed by a ftranger. "The memory of my fon Jeronymo?"

"Never, I believe, was any toaft lefs heartily received.

"There is one glafs left," faid the Marquis.—"Why does my fon Lorenzo refufe to pay this friendly tribute?"

 "Lorenzo,

"Lorenzo, trembling, received the glafs from the hands of the Monk. Trembling he put it to his lips. "My dearly beloved brother Jeronymo!" The name trembled on his tongue, and, being feized with horror, he replaced the glafs unemptied.

"That is the voice of my murderer!" exclaimed a terrible figure, which appeared inftantaneoufly in the midft of us, covered with blood, and disfigured with horrible wounds.

"But afk nothing further from me," added the Sicilian, with every fymptom of horror in his countenance. "I loft my fenfes the moment I looked at this apparition. The fame happened to every one prefent. When we recovered, the Monk and the ghoft had difappeared. Lorenzo was in the agonies of death. He was carried to bed in the moft dreadful

ful convulſions. No perſon attended him but his confeſſor and the ſorrowful old Marquis, in whoſe preſence he expired.—The Marquis died a few weeks after him. Lorenzo's ſecret is concealed in the boſom of the prieſt who received his laſt confeſſion; and no perſon ever learnt what it was.

"Soon after this event, a deep well was cleaned in the farm-yard of the Marquis's villa. It had been diſuſed many years, and the mouth of it was almoſt cloſed up by ſhrubs and old trees. A ſkeleton was found among the rubbiſh. The houſe where this happened is now no more; the family del M—— is extinct, and Antonia's tomb may be ſeen in a convent not far from Salerno."

Aſtoniſhment kept us ſilent.

"You ſee," continued the Sicilian, "how my acquaintance with

the Ruſſian officer, Armenian, or Franciſcan friar has originated. Judge whether I had not cauſe to tremble at the ſight of a being, who has twice placed himſelf in my way in a manner ſo terrible."

"I beg you will anſwer me one queſtion more," ſaid the Prince, riſing from his ſeat;—"Have you been ſincere in your account of the Chevalier?"

"Yes, your Highneſs, to the beſt of my knowledge."—"You really believe him to be an honeſt man?"

"I do, by heaven! I believe him to be an honeſt man?"

"Even at the time that he gave you the ring?"—"How! he gave me no ring. I did not ſay that he gave me the ring."

“ Very well !” faid the Prince, pulling the bell, and preparing to depart· “ And you believe” (going back to the prifoner) “ that the ghoft of the Marquis de Lanoy, which the Ruffian officer introduced after your apparition, was a real ghoft ?”

“ I cannot think otherwife.”

“ Let us go !” faid the Prince, addreffing himfelf to us. The Jailor came in. “ We have done,” faid the Prince to him. “ As for you,” turning to the prifoner, “ you fhall hear farther from me.”

“ I am tempted to afk your Highnefs the laft queftion you propofed to the Conjurer,” faid I to the Prince, when we were alone. “ Do you believe the fecond ghoft to have been a real one ?”

 “ I

" I believe it! No, not now, moſt aſſuredly."

" Not now? Then you did once believe it."

" I confeſs I was tempted for a moment to believe it to have been ſomething more than the contrivance of a juggler; and I could wiſh to ſee the man, who under ſimilar circumſtances would not have formed the ſame ſuppoſition."

" But what reaſon have you for altering your opinion? What the priſoner has related of the Armenian, ought to increaſe rather than diminiſh your belief in his ſupernatural powers."

" What this wretch has related of him!" ſaid the Prince, interrupting me very gravely. " I hope," continued he,

he, " you have not now any doubt that we have had to do with a villain."

" No; but muſt his evidence on that account—"

" The evidence of a villain! Suppoſe I had no other reaſon for doubt, the evidence of ſuch a perſon can be of no weight againſt common ſenſe and eſtabliſhed truth. Does a man who has already deceived me ſeveral times, and whoſe trade it is to deceive, does he deſerve to be heard in a cauſe in which the unſupported teſtimony of even the moſt ſincere adherent to truth could not be received? Ought we to believe a man who perhaps never once ſpoke truth for its own ſake? Does ſuch a man deſerve credit, when he appears as evidence againſt human reaſon and the eternal laws of nature? Would it not be as abſurd as to admit the accu-

ſation of a perſon notoriouſly infamous againſt unblemiſhed and reproachleſs innocence?"

"But what motives could he have for giving ſo great a character to a man whom he has ſo many reaſons to hate?"

"I am not to conclude that he can have no motives for doing this, becauſe I am unable to comprehend them? Do I know who has bribed him to deceive me? I confeſs I cannot penetrate through the myſtery of this plan; but he has certainly done a material injury to the cauſe he contends for, by ſhewing himſelf at leaſt an impoſtor, and perhaps ſomething worſe."

"The circumſtance of the ring, I allow, appears ſuſpicious."

"It is more than fuſpicious, it is deciſive. He received this ring from the murderer. Let us even ſuppoſe the circumſtances he has related are true; at the moment he received it, he muſt have been certain that it was from the perpetrator of the murder. Who but the aſſaſſin could have taken from Jeronymo's finger a ring, which he undoubtedly never was without? Throughout the whole of his narration, the Sicilian has laboured to perſuade us, that while he was endeavouring to deceive Lorenzo, Lorenzo was in reality deceiving him. Would he have had recourſe to this ſubterfuge, if he had not been ſenſible that he ſhould loſe much of our confidence, by confeſſing himſelf an accomplice with the aſſaſſin? The whole ſtory is viſibly nothing but a ſeries of impoſtures, invented merely to connect the few truths he has thought proper to give us. Ought I then to heſitate in diſ-

diſbelieving the eleventh aſſertion of a perſon who has already deceived me ten times, rather than admit a violation of the fundamental laws of nature, which I have ever found in the moſt perfect harmony ?"

" I have nothing to reply to all this; but the apparition we ſaw is to me not the leſs incomprehenſible."

" It is alſo incomprehenſible to me, although I have been tempted to find a key to it."

" How ?"

" Do not you recollect that the ſecond apparition, as ſoon as he entered, walked directly up to the altar, took the crucifix in his hand, and placed himſelf upon the carpet ?"

" It appeared ſo to me."

" And this crucifix, according to the Sicilian's confeſſion, was a conductor. You ſee, that the apparition haſtened to make himſelf electrical. Thus the blow which Lord Seymour ſtruck him with his ſword, muſt of neceſſity be ineffectual, the electric ſtroke having diſabled his arm."

" That is true with reſpect to the ſword. But the piſtol fired by the Sicilian, the ball of which rolled ſlowly upon the altar—"

" Are you convinced that this was the ſame ball which was fired from the piſtol? Not to mention that the puppet, or the man who repreſented the ghoſt, may have been ſo well accoutred as to be invulnerable by ſwords or bul-

lets; but confider who had loaded the piftols."

"True," faid I; and a fudden light darted into my mind. "The Ruffian officer had loaded them, but it was in our prefence. How could he have deceived us?"

"Why fhould he not have deceived us? Did you fufpect him fufficiently to obferve him? Did you examine the ball before it was put into the piftol? It may have been one of quickfilver or clay. Did you take notice whether the Ruffian officer really put it into the barrel, or dropped it into his other hand? But fuppofing that he actually loaded the piftols, how can you be fure that he did not leave them behind him, and take fome unloaded ones into the room where the ghoft appeared. He might very eafily have exchanged them while

while we were undreſſing. No perſon ever thought of noticing him in particular. It is very poſſible too, that the figure, at the moment when we were prevented from ſeeing it by the ſmoke of the piſtol, might have dropped another ball on the altar. Which of theſe conjectures is impoſſible?"

"Your Highneſs is right. But that ſtriking reſemblance to your deceaſed friend! I have often ſeen him with you, and I immediately recognized him in the apparition."

"I did the ſame, and I muſt confeſs the illuſion was complete; but as the juggler, from a few ſecret glances at the ſnuff-box, was able to give to his apparition ſuch a likeneſs as deceived us both, what was to prevent the Ruſſian officer (who had uſed the box during the whole time of ſupper, who

who had liberty to obſerve the picture unnoticed, and to whom I had diſcovered in confidence the perſon it repreſented) from doing the ſame? Add to this, what has been before obſerved by the Sicilian, that the prominent features of the Marquis were ſo ſtriking as to be eaſily imitated. What now remains to be explained reſpecting the ſecond ghoſt?"

"The words he uttered, the information he gave you about your friend."

"What? Did not the juggler aſſure us, that from the little which he had learnt from me, he had compoſed a ſimilar ſtory? Does not this prove that the invention was obvious and natural? Beſide, the anſwers of the ghoſt, like thoſe of an oracle, were ſo obſcure, that he was in no danger of being detected in a falſehood. If the man who

per-

perſonated the ghoſt poſſeſſed ſagacity and preſence of mind, and knew ever ſo little of the affairs on which he was conſulted, to what length might he not have carried the deception?"

"I beg your Highneſs to conſider, how much preparation ſuch a complicated artifice would have required from the Armenian; what a time it requires to paint a face with ſufficient exactneſs; what a time would have been requiſite to inſtruct the pretended ghoſt, ſo as to guard him againſt groſs errors; what a degree of minute attention to regulate every attendant or adventitious circumſtance which might be uſeful or detrimental. And remember, that the Ruſſian officer was abſent but half an hour. Was that ſhort ſpace ſufficient to make even ſuch arrangements as were indiſpenſably neceſſary? Surely not. Even a dramatic writer, who has

nas the leaſt deſire to preſerve the three unities of Ariſtotle, durſt not venture to load the interval between one act and another with ſuch a variety of actions, or to ſuppoſe in his audience ſuch a facility of belief."

"What! You think it abſolutely impoſſible that every neceſſary preparation ſhould have been made in the ſpace of half an hour."

"Indeed, I look upon it as almoſt impoſſible."

"I do not underſtand this expreſſion. Does it militate againſt the laws of time and ſpace, or of matter and motion, that a man ſo ingenious and ſo expert as this Armenian muſt neceſſarily be, aſſiſted by agents whoſe dexterity and acuteneſs are probably not inferior to his own, provided with ſuch

means and inftruments as a man of this profeffion is never without; is it impoffible that fuch a man, favoured by fuch circumftances, fhould effect fo much in fo fhort a time? Is it abfurd to fuppofe, that by a very fmall number of words or figns, he can convey to his affiftants very extenfive commiffions, and direct very complex operations? Nothing ought to be admitted againft the eftablifhed laws of nature, unlefs it is fomething with which thefe laws are abfolutely incompatible. Would you rather give credit to a miracle than admit an improbability? Would you folve a difficulty rather by overturning the powers of nature, than by believing an artful and uncommon combination of them?"

"Though the fact will not juftify a conclufion fuch as you have condemned, you muft however grant that it is far beyond our conception."

"I am

" I am almoft tempted to difpute even this," faid the Prince, with a farcaftic fmile. " What would you fay, my dear Count, if it fhould be proved, for inftance, that the operations of the Armenian were prepared and carried on not only during the half hour that he was abfent from us, not only in hafte and incidentally, but during the whole evening and the whole night? You recollect that the Sicilian employed near three hours in preparation."

" The Sicilian, your Highnefs!"

" And how will you convince me that this juggler had not as much concern in the fecond apparition as in the firft?"

" How!"

" That he was not the principal aſſiſtant of the Armenian—In a word, how will you convince me that they did not co-operate?"

" It would be a difficult taſk to prove that they did," exclaimed I, with no little ſurprize.

" Not ſo difficult, my dear Count, as you imagine. What! could it have happened by mere chance that theſe two men ſhould form a deſign ſo extraordinary and ſo complicated upon the ſame perſon, at the ſame time, and in the ſame place? Could mere chance have produced ſuch an exact harmony between their operations, that one of them ſhould appear as if ſubſervient to the other? Suppoſe the Armenian has intended to heighten the effect of his deception, by

introducing it after a lefs refined one, that he has created a Hector to make himfelf an Achilles. Suppofe he has done all this, to fee what degree of credulity he fhould find in me; to examine the avenues to my confidence; to familiarize himfelf with his fubject by an attempt that might have mifcarried without any prejudice to his plan; in a word, to try the inftrument on which he intended to play. Suppofe he has done this with a view to draw my attention on himfelf, in order to divert it from another object more important to his defign. Laftly, fuppofe he wifhes to have imputed to the juggler fome indirect methods of information which himfelf has had occafion to practife."

"What do you mean?"

"It is poffible that he may have bribed fome of my fervants to give him

fecret

ſecret intelligence, or perhaps ſome papers which may ſerve his purpoſe. One of my domeſtics has abſconded. What reaſon have I to think that the Armenian is not concerned in his leaving me? Such a connection, however, if it exiſts, may be accidentally diſcovered; a letter may be intercepted; a ſervant, who is in the ſecret, may betray his truſt. Now all the conſequence of the Armenian is deſtroyed, if I detect the ſource of his omniſcience; he therefore introduces this juggler, who muſt be ſuppoſed to have the ſame or ſome other deſign upon me. He takes care to give me early notice of him and his intentions, ſo that whatever I may hereafter diſcover, my ſuſpicions muſt neceſſarily reſt upon the Sicilian. This is the puppet with which he amuſes me, whilſt he himſelf, unobſerved and unſuſpected, is entangling me in inviſible ſnares."

"We will allow this. But is it consistent with the Armenian's plan, that he himſelf ſhould deſtroy the illuſion which he has created, and diſcloſe the myſteries of his ſcience to the eyes of the profane?"

"What myſteries does he diſcloſe? None, ſurely, which he intends to practiſe on me; he therefore loſes nothing by the diſcovery. But on the other hand, what an advantage will he gain if this pretended victory over juggling and deception ſhould render me ſecure and unſuſpecting; if he ſucceeds in diverting my attention from the right quarter (I mean himſelf,) and in fixing my wavering ſuſpicions on an object moſt remote from the real one. If at any time, either from my own doubts or at the ſuggeſtion of another, I ſhould be tempted to ſeek in the occult ſciences for a key to his myſterious wonders,

how

now could he better provide againſt ſuch an enquiry than by contraſting his prodigies with the tricks of the juggler? By confining the latter within artificial limits, and by delivering, as it were, into my hands, a ſcale by which to appreciate them, he naturally exalts and perplexes my ideas of the former. How many ſuſpicions does he preclude by this ſingle contrivance! How many methods of accounting for his miracles, which might afterwards have occurred to me, does he refute beforehand!"

"But in expoſing ſuch a finiſhed deception, he has very much counteracted his own intereſt, both by quickening the penetration of thoſe whom he meant to impoſe upon, and by ſtaggering their belief of miracles in general. If he had had ſuch a plan, your Highneſs's ſelf is the beſt proof of its inſufficiency."

" Perhaps he has been miftaken in refpect to myfelf, but his conclufions have neverthelefs been well founded. Could he forefee that I fhould exactly notice the very circumftance which expofed the whole artifice? Was it in his plan, that the creature he employed fhould be fo communicative? Are we certain that the Sicilian has not far exceeded his commiffion? He has undoubtedly done fo with refpect to the ring, and yet it is chiefly this fingle circumftance which determined my diftruft in him. A plan whofe contexture is fo artful and refined, is eafily fpoiled in the execution by an aukward inftrument. It certainly was not the Armenian's intention that the juggler fhould fpeak to us in the ftyle of a mountebank, that he fhould endeavour to impofe upon us fuch fables as are too grofs to bear the leaft reflection. For inftance, with what countenance could

could this impoſtor affirm, that the miraculous being he ſpoke of, renounces all commerce with mankind at twelve in the night? Did not we ſee him among us at that very hour?"

"That is true. He muſt have forgot it."

"People of this deſcription naturally overact their parts, and by exceeding every limit of credibility mar the effects which a well-managed deception is calculated to produce."

"I cannot, however, yet prevail on myſelf to look upon the whole as a mere contrivance of art. What! the Sicilian's terror, his convulſive fits, his ſword, the deplorable ſituation in which we ſaw him, and which was even ſuch as to move our pity; were all theſe nothing more than the mimickry of an actor?

 I allow

I allow that a ſkilful performer may carry imitation to a very high pitch, but he certainly has no power over the organs of life."

"As for that, my friend, I have ſeen the celebrated Garrick in the character of Richard the Third. But were we at that moment ſufficiently cool to be capable of obſerving diſpaſſionately? Could we judge of the emotions of the Sicilian, when we were almoſt overcome by our own? Beſides, the deciſive criſis, even of a deception, is ſo momentous to the deceiver himſelf, that exceſſive anxiety may produce in him ſymptoms as violent as thoſe which ſurprize excites in the deceived. Add to this, the unexpected entrance of the watch."

"I am glad your Highneſs mentions that. Would the Armenian have ventured

tured to difcover fuch an infamous fcheme to the eye of juftice, to expofe the fidelity of his creature to fuch a dangerous teft? And for what purpofe?"

"Leave that matter to him; he is, no doubt, acquainted with the people he employs. Do we know what fecret crimes may have fecured him the difcretion of this man? You have been informed of the office he holds at Venice; what difficulty will he find in faving a man, of whom himfelf is the only accufer?"

(This fuggeftion of the Prince was but too well juftified by the event. For, fome days after, on enquiring about the prifoner, we were told that he had efcaped, and had not fince been heard of.)

"You afk what could be his motives for delivering this man into the hands of

of juſtice?" continued the Prince. "By what other method, except this violent one, could he have wreſted from the Sicilian ſuch an infamous and improbable confeſſion, which, however, was material to the ſucceſs of his plan? Who but a man whoſe caſe is deſperate, and who has nothing to loſe, would conſent to give ſo humiliating an account of himſelf? Under what other circumſtances than ſuch as theſe could we have believed ſuch a confeſſion?"

"I grant your Highneſs all this. The two apparitions were mere contrivances of art: The Sicilian has impoſed upon us a tale which the Armenian his maſter had previouſly taught him: The efforts of both have been directed to the ſame end; and by this mutual intelligence all the wonderful incidents that have aſtoniſhed us in this adventure may be eaſily explained. But the prophecy of the

the ſquare of St. Mark, that firſt miracle, which as it were opened the door to all the reſt, remains ſtill unexplained; and of what uſe is the key to all his other wonders, if we muſt deſpair of reſolving this ſingle one?"

"Rather invert the propoſition, my dear Count, and ſay, what do all theſe wonders prove if I can demonſtrate that a ſingle one among them is a manifeſt deception? The prediction, I allow is above my conception. If it had ſtopped there, if the Armenian had cloſed the ſcene with it, I confeſs, I do not know how far I might have been carried. But in the baſe alloy with which it is mixed, it is certainly ſuſpicious."

"Gracious Sir, I grant it; but it ſtill remains incomprehenſible, and I defy all our philoſophy to explain it."

 "But,

" But," continued the Prince, " can it be really fo inexplicable?" After a few moments reflection—" I am far from pretending to the title of a philofopher, and yet I am almoft tempted to account for this miracle in a natural way, or at leaft to deprive it entirely of any extraordinary appearance."

" If your Highnefs can do that," replied I, with a very unbelieving fmile, " you will be the only wonder in which I have any faith."

" And as a proof," continued he, " how little we are juftified in flying to fupernatural powers for an explanation, I will point out to you two different ways by which we may perhaps account for this event, without doing any violence to nature."

" Two ways at once! You do indeed raife my expectations."

" You

" You have read, as well as I, the laſt accounts of my late couſin's illneſs. He died of an apoplexy. It was an attack during a fit of the ague. The extraordinarineſs of his death, I confeſs it, induced me to aſk the opinions of ſome phyſicians upon the ſubject, and the knowledge which I acquired from that circumſtance gives me a clue to this enchantment. The diſorder of my deceaſed relative, which was one of a moſt uncommon and alarming nature, had this peculiar ſymptom, that during the fit of the ague it threw the patient into a deep and irrecoverable ſleep, which naturally put an end to his exiſtence on the return of the apoplectic paroxiſm. As theſe paroxiſms return in the moſt regular order, and at an appointed hour, the phyſician is enabled, from the very moment in which he forms his opinion on the nature of the diſorder, to predict the hour of the

patient's

patient's deceafe. The third paroxifm of a tertian ague will fall to a certainty on the fifth day after the appearance of the illnefs, and that is exactly the length of time neceffary for the carriage of a letter from ***, where my coufin died, to Venice. Let us fuppofe then that our Armenian poffeffes a vigilant correfpondent among the attendants of the deceafed; that he was very much interefted to gain information from thence; that he had views upon my perfon, to the profecution of which my belief in the wonderful and the appearance of fupernatural powers would greatly conduce—thus you have a natural clue to this prediction, which is fo inconceivable to you. This is fufficient, for you may hence fee the poffibility of a third perfon's informing another of a death which happened at the moment when he announced it, in a place at forty miles diftance."

" In truth, your Highneſs in this inſtance combines things together, which, taken ſingly, appear very natural, but which could only be brought together by ſomething than is not much better than enchantment."

" What! Do you then fear a wonder leſs than an uncommon plan? As ſoon as we allow that the Armenian is engaged in a plan of conſequence, of which my deſtruction is either the end or at leaſt conducive to it, (and may we not form that opinion of him with which his appearance firſt inſpired us?) nothing will ſeem natural or forced, which could bring his ſcheme to a concluſion in the moſt expeditious manner. But what way could he deviſe more expeditious, than the ſecuring his object by putting on the appearance of a miracle-worker? Who can reſiſt a man, to whom the ſpirits are obedient? However, I grant you that

that my conjectures are not perfectly natural; I confefs that I am not even myfelf fatisfied with them. I do not infift upon it, becaufe I do not think it worth my while to call into my affiftance a well formed and deliberate defign, when it may at laft turn out to to be a mere accident."

"What!" replied I; "it may be a mere accident?"

"Certainly, nothing more!" continued the Prince. "The Armenian was aware of the danger of my coufin. He met us in the place of St. Mark. The opportunity invited him to hazard a prophecy, which, if it failed, would be nothing more than a loofe word—but if it fucceeded, might be of the greateft confequence. The event was favourable to this attempt—and he might ftill defign to make ufe of the gift of prophecy for

for the connection of his plan—Time will difclofe this fecret, or bury it in oblivion. But believe me, friend, (while he laid his hand upon mine, with a very earneft countenance) a man, to whofe word the higher powers are obedient, will either not want the affiftance of deception, or at leaft will defpife it."

"Thus," fays Count O.... "ended a converfation which I have faithfully related, becaufe it fhews the difficulties which were to be overcome before the Prince could be effectually impofed upon. I hope it may free his memory from the imputation of having blindly and inconfiderately thrown himfelf into a fnare which was fpread for his deftruction by the moft unexampled and diabolical iniquity. Many, at the moment I am writing this, are, perhaps, fmiling contemptuoufly at the Prince's credulity; but not all thofe who,

in the fancied ſuperiority of their own underſtanding, think themſelves entitled to condemn him; not all thoſe, I apprehend, would have reſiſted this firſt attempt with ſo much firmneſs. If afterwards, notwithſtanding this happy prepoſſeſſion, we witneſs his downfall; if we ſee that the black deſign againſt which, at its very opening, he was thus providentially warned, is finally ſucceſsful, we ſhall not be ſo much inclined to ridicule his weakneſs, as to be aſtoniſhed at the infamous ingenuity of a plot which could ſeduce an underſtanding ſo admirably prepared. Conſiderations of intereſt have no influence in my teſtimony. He, who alone would be thankful for it, is now no more. His dreadful deſtiny is accompliſhed. His ſoul has long ſince been purified before the throne of truth, where mine muſt likewiſe ſhortly appear. Pardon the involuntary tears which now flow at the remembrance

brance of my deceafed friend—But for the fake of juftice I write this hiftory. He was a great character, and would have adorned a throne which, feduced by the moft atrocious artifice, he attempted to afcend by the commiffion of a murder.

"Not long after thefe events," continues the Count d'O . . . . in his narrative, "I began to obferve an extraordinary alteration in the difpofition of the Prince, which was partly the immediate confequence of the laft event, and partly produced by the concurrence of many adventitious circumftances; for hitherto the Prince had avoided every fevere trial of his faith, and contented himfelf with purifying the rude and unabftracted notions of religion in which he had been educated, by thofe more rational ideas upon this fubject which obtruded themfelves upon him,

or

or with comparing the difcordant opinions with each other, without enquiring into the foundations of his faith. The reftraints impofed by religion in general, he has many times confeffed to me, always appeared to him like an enchanted caftle, into which one does not fet one's foot without horror, and that we act a much wifer part if for that reafon we pafs it with a willing refignation, without expofing ourfelves to the danger of being bewildered in its labyrinths; neverthelefs, a contrary propenfity irrefiftibly impelled him to thofe refearches which were connected with it. A fervile and bigoted education was the fource of this dread: this had impreffed frightful images upon his tender brain, which he was never able perfectly to obliterate during his whole life. Religious melancholy was an hereditary diforder in his family. The education

which

which he and his brothers received was actuated by this principle; the men to whofe care they were entruft-ed, felected with this view, were alfo either enthufiafts or hypocrites.

"To ftifle all the fprightlinefs of the boy by a gloomy reftraint of his mental faculties, was the only method of fecuring to themfelves the approbation of his noble parents. Such was the dark and gloomy afpect which the whole of our Prince's childhood wore. Mirth was banifhed even from his amufements. All his ideas of religion were accompanied by fome frightful image, and the reprefentations of terror and feverity were thofe which firft poffeffed themfelves of his lively imagination, and which alfo the longeft retained their empire over it. His God was an object of terror, a being whofe fole occupation is the chaftifement of

his creatures. The adoration which he paid to him, a blind fubmiffion ftifling all his courage and vigour. In all his infantine or youthful propenfities, which a ftout body and blooming conftitution naturally excited to break out with greater violence, religion ftood in his way; fhe oppofed every thing upon which his youthful heart was bent; he learned to confider her not as a friend, but as the fcourge of his paffions; fo that a filent indignation was continually kindled againft her in his heart, which, together with a revering faith and a blind dread, made both in his heart and head the ftrangeft mixture—an abhorrence of the Lord before whom he trembled. It is no wonder, therefore, that he took the firft opportunity of efcaping from fo galling a yoke—but he fled from it as a bond-flave from his rigorous mafter, who even in the midft of freedom

drags

drags along with him a ſenſe of his ſervitude; for, as he did not renounce the faith of his earlier years from a deliberate conviction, as he did not wait till the maturity and improvement of his reaſon had weaned him from it, as he had eſcaped from it like a fugitive, upon whoſe perſon the rights of his maſter are ſtill in force, ſo was he obliged, even after his wideſt ſeparation, to return to it at laſt. He had eſcaped with his chain, and for that reaſon muſt neceſſarily become the prey of any one who ſhould diſcover it, and know how to make uſe of the diſcovery. That he did conſider himſelf in ſuch a light, though the reader may not yet have ſuppoſed ſo, the ſequel of this hiſtory will prove.

" The confeſſions of the Sicilian left impreſſed upon his mind more important concluſions than the whole of the circumſtance deſerved; and the ſmall victory

victory which his reafon had thence gained over this weak impofture, remarkably increafed his reliance upon it. The facility with which he had been able to unravel this deception, appeared to have perfectly overwhelmed him. Truth and error were not yet fo accurately diftinguifhed from each other in his mind, but that he often happened to miftake the arguments which were in favour of the one for thofe which were in favour of the other. Thence it arofe, that the fame blow which urged his faith to credulity, made the whole edifice of it totter. In this inftance he fell into the fame error as an unexperienced man who has been deceived in love or friendfhip becaufe he made a bad choice, and who drops all credit in thefe fenfations, becaufe he takes mere incidental circumftances for their actual diftinguifhing features. The unmafking

masking of a deception made even truth suspicious to him, because he had unfortunately discovered the truth on very weak grounds.

"This imaginary triumph pleased him in proportion to the magnitude of the oppression from which it seemed to have delivered him. From this instant there arose in his mind a scepticism which did not spare even the most venerable objects.

"Many circumstances concurred to encourage him in this turn of mind, and still more to confirm him in it.

"He now quitted the retirement in which he had hitherto lived, and was obliged to give way to a more dissipated mode of life. His rank was discovered. Attentions which he was obliged to return, etiquettes for which

he was indebted to his rank, drew him imperceptibly within the vortex of the great world. His rank, as well as his perſonal attractions, opened to him the circles of all the *beaux eſprits* in Venice, and he ſoon found himſelf on terms of intimacy with the moſt enlightened perſons in the republic, the men of learning as well as politicians. This obliged him to enlarge the uniform and narrow circle to which his underſtanding had hitherto been confined. He began to perceive the poverty and debility of his ideas, and to feel the want of more elevated impreſſions. The old-faſhioned dreſs of his underſtanding, ſpite of the many advantages with which it was accompanied, formed an unpleaſing contraſt with the current ideas of ſociety; his ignorance of the commoneſt things frequently expoſed him to ridicule, and nothing did he dread ſo much as that. The unfortunate prejudice which attached

rached to his native country, appeared to him a challenge to overcome it in his own perfon. Thence arofe a peculiarity in his character; he was offended with every attention that he thought he owed to his rank, and not to his natural good qualities. He felt this humiliation principally in the company of perfons who fhone by their abilities, and triumphed, as it were, over their birth by their merit. To perceive himfelf diftinguifhed as a prince in fuch a fociety, was always a bafe humiliation to him, becaufe he unfortunately conceived that by that title he was totally excluded from all competition. All thefe circumftances together convinced him of the neceffity for the formation of his mind, which he had hitherto neglected, in order to raife it to a level with the thinking part of the world, from which he had remained fo far remote; and for that pur-

pofe he chofe the moft fafhionable books, to which he now applied himfelf with all the ardour with which he was accuftomed to purfue every object he pitched upon. But the unfkilful hand that directed his choice always prompted him to felect fuch as were little calculated for the improvement either of his heart or his reafon. And even in this inftance, he was influenced by that propenfity which rendered the charms of every thing incomprehenfible and irrefiftible. He had neither attention nor memory for any thing that was not connected with this: his reafon and his heart remained empty, while he was filling the vacuities in his brain with confufed ideas.

The dazzling ftile of the one captivated his imagination, while the fubtlety of the other enfnared his reafon.

They were both able easily to possess themselves of a mind which became the prey of any one who obtruded himself upon it with a good assurance. A course of reading, which had been continued with ardour for more than a year, had scarcely enriched him with one benevolent idea; but filled his head with doubts, which, as a natural consequence with such a character, had almost found an unfortunate road to his heart. In a word, he had entered this labyrinth as a credulous enthusiast, had left it as a sceptic, and was at length become a perfect free-thinker.

Among the many circles into which they had introduced him, there was a private society called the Bucentauro, which, under the external show of a noble and rational liberality of sentiment, encouraged the most unbridled licentiousness of manners and

 opinions.

opinions. As they enumerated many of the clergy among their members, and could even boaſt of ſome cardinals at their head, the Prince was the more eaſily induced to be admitted into it.

He thought that certain dangerous truths, which reaſon diſcovers, could be no where better preſerved than in the hands of ſuch perſons, whoſe rank confined them to moderation, and who had had the advantage of hearing and examing the other ſide of the queſtion.

The Prince did not recollect that licentiouſneſs of ſentiment and manners takes ſo much the ſtronger hold among perſons of this rank, inaſmuch as they for that reaſon feel one curb leſs; and this was the caſe with the Bucentauro; moſt of whoſe members, through an execrable philoſophy, and manners worthy of ſuch a guide, were not only a

diſgrace

disgrace to their own rank, but even to human nature itself. The society had its secret degrees; and I will believe, for the credit of the Prince, that they never thought him worthy of admission into the inmost sanctuary. Every one who entered this society was obliged, at least so long as he continued to be a member of it, to lay aside all distinctions arising from rank, nation, or religion; in short, every general mark or distinction whatever, and to submit himself to the condition of universal equality. To be elected a member was indeed a difficult matter, as superiority of understanding alone paved the way to it. The society boasted of the highest ton and the most cultivated taste, and such indeed was its fame throughout all Venice. This, as well as the appearance of equality which predominated in it, attracted the Prince irresistibly. Sensible conversa-

tions, ſet off by the moſt admirable humour, inſtructive amuſements, and the flower of the learned and political world, which were all attracted to this point as to their common centre, concealed from him for a long time the danger of this connection. Though he had by degrees diſcovered, through its maſk, the ſpirit of the inſtitution, as they were tired of being any longer on their guard before him, to recede was dangerous, and falſe ſhame and anxiety for his ſafety obliged him to conceal the diſpleaſure which he felt. But he already began, merely from familiarity with men of this claſs and their ſentiments, though they did not excite him to imitation, to loſe the pure and charming ſimplicity of his character, and the delicacy of his moral feelings. His underſtanding, ſo little ſupported by any real knowledge, could not, without foreign aſſiſtance, ſolve the fallacious

cious ſophiſms with which he had been here enſnared; and this fatal corroder had conſumed all, or nearly all, on which his morality reſted. He gave away the natural and neceſſary ſupports of his happineſs for ſophiſms which deſerted him at a critical moment, and conſequently obliged him to abide by the beſt deciſion which ſhould firſt offer itſelf.

Perhaps it was yet left to the hand of a friend to extricate him at a proper opportunity from this abyſs; but, beſides that I did not become acquainted with the interior of the Bucentauro till long after the evil had taken place, an urgent circumſtance called me away from Venice juſt at the beginning of this period. Moreover, Lord Seymour, a valuable acquaintance of the Prince's, whoſe underſtanding was proof againſt every ſpecies of

 deception,

deception, and who would have infallibly been a secure support to him, left us at this time in order to return to his native country. Those in whose hands I left the Prince were very worthy men, but inexperienced, excessively narrow in their religious opinions, and as much deficient in insight into the evil as in credit with the Prince. They had nothing to oppose to his captious sophisms, except the maxims of a blind and unenquiring faith, which either irritated him or excited his ridicule. He saw through them too easily, and his superior reason soon silenced those weak defenders of the good cause, which will be clearly evinced from an instance that I shall introduce in the sequel. The others, who, subsequent to this, possessed themselves of his confidence, were much more occupied in plunging him deeper into it. When I returned to Venice in

in the following year, a change had taken place in every thing.

The influence of this new philosophy soon shewed itself in the Prince's conduct. The more he openly pursued pleasure, and formed new friendships, the more did he desert his old ones. He pleased me less and less every day; we saw each other seldom, and indeed he was seldom to be found. He had launched out into the torrent of the great world. His threshold was never clear when he was at home. One amusement introduced another, one banquet another, and one pleasure was succeeded by a second. He was the beauty whom every one adored—the king and idol of every circle. As often as he reflected on the former quietness of his retired life, amidst the bustle of the world, so often did he find more reason for astonishment. Every thing met

his wiſhes. Whatever he uttered was admirable, and when he remained ſilent it was committing a robbery upon the company. They underſtood the art of almoſt baniſhing reflection from his ſoul by an agreeable thoughtleſsneſs, and through a delicate aſſiſtance to overwhelm him with it.

This happineſs, which accompanied him every where, and this univerſal ſucceſs, raiſed him indeed too much in his own ideas, becauſe it gave him reliance upon and confidence in himſelf.

The high opinion which he thence acquired of his own worth, made him credit the exceſſive and almoſt idolatrous adoration that was paid to his underſtanding; which, without this augmented and ſomewhat juſt ſelf-complacency, muſt have neceſſarily recalled him to his ſenſes. For the preſent, however,

however, this univerſal voice was only the confirmation of that which his complacent vanity whiſpered to him in private—a tribute which he was entitled to by right. He would have infallibly diſengaged himſelf from this ſnare, had they allowed him to take breath—had they granted him a moment of uninterrupted leiſure for comparing his real merit with the picture that was exhibited to him in this ſeducing mirror; but his exiſtence was a continued ſtate of intoxication, of a ſtaggering dizzineſs. The higher he had been elevated, the more difficulty had he to ſupport himſelf in his elevation. This inceſſant exertion ſlowly undermined him—reſt had forſaken even his ſlumbers. They had diſcovered his weakneſs, and turned to good account the paſſion which they had kindled in his breaſt.

His

His worthy attendants ſoon ſuffered for the *ſpirit* of their lord. That anxious ſenſibility, thoſe glorious truths which his heart once embraced with the greateſt enthuſiaſm, now began to be the objects of his ridicule. He revenged himſelf on the great truths of religion for the oppreſſion which he had ſo long ſuffered from miſconception. But, ſince from too true a voice his heart combated the intoxication of his head, there was more of acrimony than of humour in his jokes. His diſpoſition began to alter, and caprice to make its appearance. The moſt beautiful ornament of his character, his moderation, vaniſhed—paraſites had poiſoned his excellent heart. That tender delicacy of addreſs which frequently made his attendants forget that he was their lord, was now obliged not ſeldom to give place to a deciſive and deſpotic tone, that made the more ſenſible

impreſſion,

impreſſion, becauſe it was not founded upon the external diſtinction of birth, for the want of which they could have more eaſily conſoled themſelves, and which he himſelf eſteemed leſs; but upon an injurious eſtimation of his own individual merit; ſince, when at home, he was attacked by reflections that ſeldom made their appearance in the buſtle of company; his own people ſeldom beheld him otherwiſe than gloomy, peeviſh, and unhappy, whilſt a forced vivacity made him the ſoul of every circle. With the ſincereſt ſorrow did we behold him treading this dangerous path. In the tumult in which he was involved, the feeble voice of friendſhip was no longer heard, and he was yet too much intoxicated to underſtand it.

Juſt at the beginning of this epoch an affair of the greateſt conſequence required

required my preſence in the court of my ſovereign, and which I dared not poſtpone even for the deareſt intereſts of friendſhip. An inviſible hand, which I did not diſcover till long after that period, had contrived to derange my affairs there, and to ſpread reports which I was obliged to haſten to contradict by my preſence. My abſence from the Prince was as painful to me as it was pleaſing to him. The ties which united us had now been ſevered for ſome time; but his fate had awakened all my anxiety: I on that account made the Baron de F... promiſe to inform me in his letters of every event, which he has done in the moſt conſcientious manner. As I was now for a conſiderable time no longer an eye-witneſs of theſe events, it will be allowable for me to introduce the Baron de F... in my ſtead, and to fill up the gap in my narrative by the contents

tents of his letters, notwithftanding that the reprefentation of my friend F... is not always that which I fhould have given. I would not, however, alter any of his expreffions, by which the reader will be enabled to difcover the truth with very little trouble.

LETTER I.

BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

I THANK you, my beloved friend, that you have given me permiffion to continue with you, even in your abfence, the converfation of friendfhip, which, during your ftay here was my greateft pleafure. There is not any perfon here with whom I could venture to converfe, as you are well aware, on account of private tranfactions; and, independent of that, I defpife the character of the people. Since the Prince became a member of their fociety, and from the moment that you were torn from

from us, I have been friendlefs in the midft of this populous city.

Z. . . takes it in an eafier manner; for, encircled by the fair ones at Venice, he learns to forget the forrows which he is obliged to fhare with me when at home. And why fhould he perplex himfelf? He defires nothing from the Prince but that which a maf-ter would beftow; but I, you know, place him nearer to my heart, and think I can never be too folicitous about his wel-fare and happinefs; and, indeed, I have reafon for it. I have now lived with him fixteen years, and exift only for him. At the age of nine years I entered into his fervice, and fince that time I have never been feparated from him. I have grown up under his patronage, fhared with him his pleafures and mis-fortunes, and time has converted refpect into a fincere attachment. Until now I looked

I looked upon him as my friend and brother; we bafked in the fun-beam of happinefs, uninterrupted by the clouds of mifery.

Since you have left us, confiderable alterations have taken place. The Prince . . de . . . arrived here laft week with a great retinue, and has corrupted our circle of acquaintance with ideas of a tumultuous life. As he and our Prince are fo nearly related, and live at prefent upon good terms, I fufpect they will not feparate from one another during his ftay here, which will laft, as I have heard, till the Afcenfion. His debut has already attracted notice; and for ten days the Prince has been in the midft of gaiety. The ftile in which the Prince . . . de . . . has begun his career may be juftified upon the ground that his ftay here will not be long; but the firft part of the bufinefs is, that he

has induced our Prince to partake of thofe infidious pleafures, knowing that he could not eafily deny him his requeft, on account of the peculiar connection which exifts between their houfes; added to this, in a few weeks we muft depart from Venice, when he will be obliged to abandon this extraordinary and infufferable mockery of happinefs, and which, perhaps, may make a ferious impreffion on his mind.

The Prince ... de ..., it is reported, is here on the bufinefs of the order of .... That he has taken advantage of all the acquaintances of our Prince you may eafily imagine. He was received into the Bucentauro with great fplendor, and pleafed himfelf with the idea that he was characterized as a wit, and one of great fpirit; and he has called himfelf in his correfpondences (which he maintains in all parts of the world) the

the *philoſophical Prince.* I know not whether you have ever had the fortune to ſee him perſonally. He diſplays a promiſing exterior, piercing eyes, and a countenance full of expreſſion. Polite, and unaffected, he entertains (pardon me this expreſſion) a princely reſpect for the feelings of his inferiors, but at the ſame time puts great confidence in himſelf. Who could refuſe to pay adoration to ſo princely a character? and how ſuch a ſolitary Prince as ours will appear in oppoſition to ſuch dazzling accompliſhments, time itſelf muſt diſcover.

In the arrangement of our affairs, many and great changes have taken place. We poſſeſs a new and magnificent houſe oppoſite the new Procuracy, becauſe the lodgings at the Moor Hotel were too ſmall for the Prince.

Our

Our houfehold has been augmented by twelve perfons. Pages, moors, body-guards, &c. grace our retinue. You complained during your ftay here of extravagance; you fhould be here now to witnefs the prefent fyftem.

Our internal arrangements are ftill the fame; only that the Prince, who no longer refpects the advice of thofe he once loved, is become more referved and cold towards us, and that we very feldom fee him or are in his company, except in the hours employed in dreffing and undreffing him. Under the pretext that we fpeak the French language very bad, and the Italian not at all, he excludes us from his prefence, which would not affect me in any great degree, but that I believe, to fpeak the truth, he is afhamed of us; and that circumftance difpleafes me, be-

caufe

caufe I am confident we have not deferved fuch treatment.

Of all our people (as you wifh to know the minutiæ) he feems moft attached to Biondello, whom he took into his fervice, as you muft remember, when he could not difcover the retreat of his former fervant from Bremen, and who has become, by this new manner of life, quite a neceffary being. This man knows how every thing is going on at Venice, and he employs his time to fome purpofe. He is as if he had a thoufand eyes and a thoufand hands to fet in motion at once. He contrives all plans, and gains the greater part of his knowledge, as he fays, by the help of the gondoliers; for that reafon, he has become a great acquifition to the Prince. He makes him acquainted with every new face whom the Prince has met in his focie-

ties; and the fecret information which he gives his Highnefs has always been found correct. Befide this, he reads and writes the Italian and French in an excellent ftyle, by which means he has already become the Prince's fecretary. I muft relate to you a trait of fidelity in him, which is indeed very rare to be found in men of his ftation. Not long ago a merchant of great confequence from Rimini begged to be admitted to the Prince. The matter concerned a particular complaint againft Biondello. The Procurator, his former mafter, who muft have been an odd fellow, had for fome time lived upon bad terms with his relations. Biondello poffeffed his confidence, and to him he entrufted all his fecrets. As he was upon his death-bed, he made him fwear never to difclofe them to any one, that his relations might not be benefited by

 them,

them, and gave him, as a reward, a great legacy.

When the will was opened, and his papers inſpected, there were found conſiderable numbers of blanks, to which Biondello alone could furniſh the key. He denied that he knew any thing of the matter, gave up to the relations his legacy, and perſevered in his fidelity to the injunctions of his deceaſed maſter. Great offers were made to him by the relations, but all to no purpoſe; at laſt he eluded their threats of forcing him to confeſſion, by entering into the ſervice of the Prince.

This merchant, who was the heir at law, addreſſed himſelf to the Prince, and made ſtill greater offers to Biondello if he would diſcover the ſecret— but it was all in vain. The Prince interfered, but he remained firm. He confeſſed however to his Highneſs, that

ſecrets

ſecrets of great importance were confided to him, and he did not deny that the deceaſed might have acted with too much ſeverity towards his relations; but he added, "he was my good maſter and benefactor, and with the firmeſt confidence in my ſincerity he died. I was the only friend he left in the world—as ſuch I will never betray my truſt, nor act in contradiction to his dying requeſt." In the mean time he gave a hint, that a diſcovery would not add to the honour of his deceaſed maſter. Was not ſuch conduct worthy to be imitated? You may eaſily imagine that the Prince did not inſiſt upon his violating his vow of fidelity. This extraordinary attachment which he ſhewed for the deceaſed, gained him the moſt unlimited confidence of his royal maſter.

Happineſs attend you, my dear friend. I look back upon our former manner of life with ſecret pleaſure, to which you have contributed in a high degree. I fear we ſhall never more enjoy thoſe tranquil hours at Venice which we were wont formerly to do, and am much miſtaken if the Prince is not of the ſame way of thinking. The element in which he lives at preſent is not that in which he can be happy in future, or an experience of ſixteen years deceives me. Farewel!

LETTER II.

BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

MAY 18.

I HAD no idea that our ſtay at Venice would prove ſo ſatisfactory as it has done. He has ſaved the life of a man—I am reconciled to him.

The Prince not long ago ſuffered himſelf to be carried home in a chair from the Bicentauro; and two footmen, with Biondello, conducted him. I know not how it happened, but the chair, which had been hired in haſte, broke, and the Prince was obliged to walk on

foot the remainder of the way. Biondello went before. The way lay through feveral dark ftreets; and as it was not far from day-break, fome of the lamps burnt but faintly, while the others were totally extinguifhed. They had been walking a quarter of an hour, when Biondello difcovered that he had taken the wrong road. The fimilarity of the bridges had deceived him, and inftead of croffing that of St. Mark, they found themfelves in *Seftiere* of *Raftello*. It was in one of the bye ftreets, and not a foul ftirring near the fpot. They were obliged to turn back to gain, as the beft way, one of the principal ftreets. They had walked but a few fteps, when in an adjoining ftreet they diftinctly heard the cry of "Murder!" The Prince, unarmed as he was, fnatched from one of the fervants a ftick, and with his ufual courage, which you have often witneffed,

neſſed, ran towards the place whence the voice iſſued. Three ruffianlike fellows were juſt on the point of vanquiſhing a perſon, who, with his ſervant, was defending himſelf, apparently overcome by fatigue, when the Prince appeared, and prevented the villains from murdering him. His voice, and that of his ſervants, ſtartled the murderers, who did not expect in ſuch a diſmal place to meet with any interruption.

They immediately left their man, after ſeveral ſlight ſtabs with their daggers, and took flight. Fainting with loſs of blood, the wounded man ſunk into the arms of the Prince: his conductors then told him, that he had ſaved the life of the Marquis of Civitella, the nephew of the Cardinal A. . . i. As the Marquis's wounds bled very much, Biondello performed as well as he was

able the office of ſurgeon, and the Prince immediately ſaw him taken to the palace of his uncle, which was not far diſtant from the ſpot. This done, he left the houſe, without diſcovering his rank. But through the means of a footman, who was acquainted with Biondello, he was betrayed. The following morning the Cardinal appeared, an old acquaintance from the Bucentauro. The viſit laſted an hour; the Cardinal was in great emotion, and when they ſeparated tears ſtood in his eyes; the Prince alſo appeared extremely concerned. The ſame evening his Highneſs paid a viſit to the wounded man, whom the Surgeon affirmed would ſoon recover. The cloak in which he was wrapped up had in ſome meaſure ſhielded him from the force with which the ſtabs were given.—Since that accident, not a day has paſſed over without the Prince paying a viſit to the Cardinal, or re-

receiving one from him; and a great friendſhip begins to exiſt between him and that family.

The Cardinal is a venerable man of ſixty, with a majeſtic appearance, but full of gaiety and good health. They think him one of the richeſt prelates in the whole Republic. Of his enormous fortune he himſelf is the treaſurer, and, although a prudent œconomiſt, he does not deſpiſe the pleaſures of the world. This nephew, who is his only heir, does not always poſſeſs the good opinion of his uncle. Although the old man is not an enemy to youthful pleaſures, the conduct of the nephew appears to exhauſt every principle of tolerance in his relation. His diſſipated principles, and his licentious manner of living, ſupported by every vice that is countenanced by the groſſeſt ſenſuality, make him the terror of all fathers, and the curſe of

domeftic happinefs. This laft attack, it is faid, was owing to an intrigue which he had concerted with the wife of the **** ambaffador: not to mention other troubles, from which only the power and money of the Cardinal could extricate him. But for this the Cardinal might be the moft enviable man in all Italy, becaufe he poffeffes every thing that can make life worth preferving. But his nephew's enormities render the gifts of fortune fuperfluous; and the continual fear of not being able to find an heir worthy of his property, diminifhes the comfort that his Eminence would otherwife enjoy in fuch a ftate of affluence.

I have this information from Biondello. In this man the Prince has acquired a treafure. Every day he makes himfelf more worthy of eftimation, and we almoft hourly difcover in him fome

new

new talent. Not long ago the Prince, being over-fatigued, could not ſleep. The night-lamp was extinguiſhed, and no bell could waken the valet de chambre, who it was ſoon found was gone to ſleep out of the houſe with an opera girl. The Prince had the reſolution to get up himſelf, to call one of his people. He had not gone far, when he heard at a little diſtance from him enchanting muſic. He followed the ſound, and found Biondello playing upon the flute in his room, with his fellow-ſervants round him. He commanded him to proceed. With admirable ſkill Biondello repeated the ſame air, with the moſt delightful variations and niceties of a virtuoſo. The Prince, who is a connoiſſeur in muſic, declared, that he might play with great confidence in the beſt concert.

“ I muſt diſmiſs this man,” ſaid he to me the following morning; “ I am unable to recompence him according to his merits.”

Biondello, who heard theſe words, came towards him.

“ Gracious Sir, if you do that, you deprive me of my beſt reward.”

“ You are worthy of ſomething better than being a ſervant,” ſaid my maſter. “ I will not any longer be a bar to the improvement of your fortune.”

“ Do not preſs upon me any other fortune, gracious Sir, than that which I have choſen myſelf.”

“ And to neglect ſuch a talent—No! I muſt not conſent.”

"Then permit me, your Highneſs, to exerciſe it every now and then in your preſence."

To this propoſition the Prince immediately conſented, and Biondello obtained an apartment adjoining the ſleeping-room of his maſter, where he lulled him to repoſe by ſoft and delicate airs, and awoke him in the morning with the ſame melody. The Prince inſiſted upon increaſing his ſalary, which he did not accept without requeſting his Highneſs to permit him to let it lie in his hands, as a capital which perhaps at ſome future period might be of ſervice to him. The Prince expected that he would ſoon apply for his money, or ſome other favour; and whatever it might have been the Prince would not have denied it. Farewell, my beſt of friends. I expect with impatience news from 'R***n.

LETTER III.

THE BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

JUNE 4.

THE Marquis Civitella, who is now entirely recovered from his wounds, was introduced laſt week by the Cardinal his uncle to the Prince, and ſince that day he has followed him like his ſhadow. Biondello, I ſuſpect, has not told me the truth concerning the character of the Marquis, at leaſt he is gone too far in his deſcription.

He is to all appearance a moſt amiable man, and irreſiſtible in company. It is

not

not poſſible to be angry with him; the firſt ſight of him has conquered all my prejudices. Figure to your mind a man of the moſt enchanting perſon, a face full of uncommon expreſſion, an inſinuating tone of voice, poſſeſſed of the moſt fluent eloquence, united with all the advantages of the beſt education. He has none of that low deſpicable pride which in general ſo much diſgraces the nobility here.

Every action teems with the energy of youth, benevolence, and warm ſenſibility. They muſt, in relating his extravagances, have gone far beyond the truth; I never ſaw a more perfect contraſt than his conduct is to that which is repreſented of him. If he be really ſo licentious as Biondello aſſerted, then he is a Siren, whom no creature is able to reſiſt.

Towards me he acted with unreferved confidence. He confeffed to me with the moft agreeable franknefs, that he did not ftand in high favour with his uncle the Cardinal, and perhaps he might have deferved his cenfure. But he was ferioufly refolved to amend his life; and he declared the merit of his reformation would entirely fall to the Prince: In the meantime he hoped, through his interference, to be entirely reconciled with his uncle, becaufe he had the higheft confidence of the Prince's character. He had wanted till now a friend and inftructor, and he hoped to acquire both in the perfon of the Prince.

The Prince exercifes all the authority of a tutor over him, and guides him with the paternal watchfulnefs and folicitude of a Mentor. This confidence alfo gives him certain advantages, and

he knows perfectly well how to make them valuable. He seldom quits the presence of the Prince, he partakes of all his pleasures, and has lately become one of the Bucentauro; and that is lucky for him,—he was before too young. Wherever he goes with the Prince, he charms the society by his accomplishments, which he is well skilled in turning to the greatest advantage. Nobody, they say, ever could succeed in reclaiming him; and should the Prince accomplish this Herculean labour, he will deserve the highest encomiums for his conduct. But I fear very much the tide will turn, and Mentor become the pupil of his scholar; to this end all the present circumstances seem to lead.

The Prince ** d** is departed, and indeed to the greatest satisfaction of all here, my master not excepted. What

what I foretold, dear O . . . ., is thus happily accomplifhed. Two fuch oppofite characters could not long, I was confident, maintain a good underftanding with each other. The Prince . . d . . was not long at Venice before I obferved a fchifm in their friendfhip; from which circumftance the Prince was in danger of lofing all his former admirers. Wherever he went, he found this rival in his way, who poffeffed the artful quality of turning every advantage in which our Prince was deficient to good account. He had a variety of little manœuvres at his command, which our mafter, from a noble fenfibility, difdained. From fuch circumftances, in a fhort time, he procured a number of friends of his own defcription to follow his advice and participate in his fchemes*. It would have

* In the unfavourable opinion which the Baron F.... forms of our Prince, in feveral parts of the firft letter, every one who has the happinefs to know

have been better for the Prince if he had not confidered him as an enemy; but had looked forward to the time when this would have been the cafe. But now he has advanced too far into the ftream, to reach the fhore without difficulty. Although thefe trifles, by habit, have acquired an afcendancy over him, and probably he may defpife them in his heart; yet his pride will not permit him to renounce them; naturally fuppofing that his fubmiffion will appear like conviction, rather than a free difpofition to confefs his abhorrence of them. The fatirical manner in which they always converfed, and the fpirit of rivalfhip that influenced his opponent, have alfo feized upon him. And to preferve his conquefts, and to maintain himfelf upon the dangerous principles to which the

know him intimately, will think with me, that he went beyond the limits of his judgment, and will afcribe it to the prejudice of this young obferver. AN. OF THE COUNT O....

opinion

opinion of the world had riveted him, he is believed to augment the allurements of faſhion and gaiety, and this cannot be acquired but by ſplendour equal to his rank; on that account he has been involved in perpetual banquets, concerts, and gaming. And this ſtrange madneſs diffuſed itſelf through their houſholds, although they are in general more watchful of the principle of honour, than their maſters; he is therefore obliged to gain the favour of his people by liberality. A long chain of poverty is the unavoidable conſequence of this unhappy connection.

We have got rid at laſt of the rival; but what he has ſubverted cannot ſo eaſily be reſtored. The treaſure of the Prince is exhauſted; all that he had ſaved by a ſtrict œconomy is gone; we muſt haſten from Venice, or elſe be involved in debt, which, till now, he has

carefully avoided. Our departure is certainly to take place as ſoon as freſh remittances arrive.

The many unneceſſary expences he has incurred would be of little conſequence if his happineſs increaſed in proportion; but he was never leſs happy than at preſent! He feels that he is not now what he formerly was—he is diſſatisfied with himſelf, and ruſhes into new diſſipation, to avoid the piercing conſequences of reflection. One new acquaintance follows another, which is fatal to his reformation. I know not what may happen, but we muſt depart—We have no other ſafety—But, dear friend, as yet I have not received a ſingle line from you—how muſt I interpret this long ſilence?

LETTER IV.

THE BARON F... TO THE COUNT D'O...

JUNE 12.

RECEIVE my thanks, dear friend, for that token of your remembrance which young B...hl brought over to me. But what do you ſay about letters which I was to have received? I have not received any letters from you till now; not even a line. What a circuit muſt thoſe which I now receive have taken! For the future, dear O... when you honour me with your letters, ſend them by Trient, and under cover to my maſter.

We have at length been obliged, my dear friend, to take that ſtep which we had hitherto ſo fortunately avoided. The notes were kept back, even at this preſſing emergency—for the firſt time were they kept back; we were abſolutely compelled to have recourſe to a uſurer, and the Prince willingly pays ſomething more for the ſake of ſecreſy. The worſt of theſe unpleaſant circumſtances is, that it delays our departure.

Such was the ſtate of our affairs when the Prince and I came to an explanation. The whole of the buſineſs had paſſed through Biondello's hands, and the Jew was preſent before I had the leaſt ſuſpicion of it.

I was grieved to the heart to ſee the Prince reduced to ſuch an extremity, and it revived in me all the recollection of

of the paſt, and all my fears for the future; ſo that I certainly might have looked a little melancholy and gloomy when the uſurer left the room. The Prince, to whom the preceding ſcene had doubtleſs been by no means pleaſing, walked backwards and forwards with uneaſineſs. The rouleaus of gold were yet lying on the table—I was ſtanding at the window, and employing myſelf in counting the windows in the *Procuratié*—there was a long ſilence. At length he addreſſed himſelf to me—

" F..." he began, " I cannot bear any diſmal faces about me."

I was ſilent.

" Why do you not anſwer me?—Do I not ſee that it will break your heart not to pour forth your vexation? I command you to ſpeak. You may, perhaps,

perhaps, wonder what extraordinary affairs I am concealing from you."

" If I am gloomy, gracious Sir," replied I, " it is only becaufe I do not fee you in better fpirits."

" I know," continued he, " that you think I have acted wrongly for fome time paft—that every ftep which I have taken has difpleafed you—that—— What does the Count d'O. . . fay in his letters?"

" The Count d'O. . . has not written to me."

" Not written? Why will you not confefs the truth? You mutually lay open your hearts to each other—you and the Count. I know it very well: however, you need not conceal it from

me. I ſhall not introduce myſelf into your ſecrets."

"The Count d'O..." replied I, "has only anſwered the firſt of three letters which I wrote to him."

"I was wrong," continued he; "is it not ſo? (taking up one of the rouleaus) I ſhould not have acted thus."

"I ſee very plainly that the ſtep was *neceſſary*."

"I ought not to have involved myſelf in ſuch a neceſſity."

I remained ſilent.

"Indeed, I ought not to have ventured beyond that point in the completion of my wiſhes, ſo as to have become a

grey-

greybeard as ſoon as I became a man. Becauſe I once ſtep forth from the dreary uniformity of my former life, and look around me to ſee whether there will ſpring up no ſource of enjoyment for me in any other quarter; becauſe I—"

"If it were only a trial, gracious Sir, I have nothing more to ſay; for the experience which it has procured for you would not be purchaſed at too dear a rate, though it coſt three times as much. It hurts me, I muſt confeſs, that the opinion of the world ſhould have to decide upon the queſtion, How you can be happy?"

"Fortunate man, who can thus deſpiſe the opinion of the world! I am its creature, and muſt be its ſlave. What elſe are we governed by, but opinion? Opinion is every thing with

us

us princes. Opinion is our nurfe and educatrefs in infancy, our legiflatrefs and miftrefs in our manly years, and our crutch in old age. Take from us what we receive from opinion, and the meaneft of the humbleft clafs is better off than we are; for his fate has taught him a philofophy which enables him to bear it. A prince who laughs at opinion, is his own deftroyer, like the prieft who denies the exiftence of a god."

"And yet, gracious Prince—"

"I know what you are going to fay. I can pafs the boundary of the circle which my birth has drawn around me.—But can I eradicate from my memory all the foolifh ideas which education and early habit have planted in it, and which a hundred thoufand of you fools have ever been impreffing

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with more and more firmneſs? Every one wiſhes to be what he is to *perfection*, and our exiſtence conſiſts, in ſhort, in *appearing happy*. If we cannot be ſo according to your mode, ſhall we not for that reaſon be ſo at all? If we can no longer taſte of joy immediately from its uncorrupted ſource, ſhall we not deceive ourſelves with an artificial enjoyment, ſhall we not ſnatch a ſmall compenſation even from the very hand which robs us?"

"You once found theſe joys in your own heart."

"But if I do not any longer find them there!—Oh, how came we to fall upon this ſubject? Why muſt you awake in me the recollection of that, even if I have had recourſe to this tumult of voluptuouſneſs, in order to ſtifle a voice which renders my life miſerable—

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in order to lull to reſt this inquiſitive reaſon which moves to and fro in my brain like a ſharp ſickle, and with every new ſtroke cuts off a new branch of my happineſs?"

" Beſt of princes."

He got up, and walked backwards and forwards in the room with unuſual agitation, and ſoon after left it.

Pardon, dear O... this tedious letter. You wiſh to know every trifle which concerns the Prince, and I may juſtly rank his moral philoſophy among them. I know that the ſtate of his mind is important to you, and his actions, I am aware, are on that account alſo important to you. I have for that reaſon faithfully tranſcribed all that I recollected of this converſation. I ſhall at a future period in-

form

form you of a new occurrence, which you could hardly have been led to expect from a dialogue like that of to-day. Farewell.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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